

ILLUSTRATED FICTION MAGAZINE

SMITH'S

MAGAZINE

SEPT., 1911

15 CENTS



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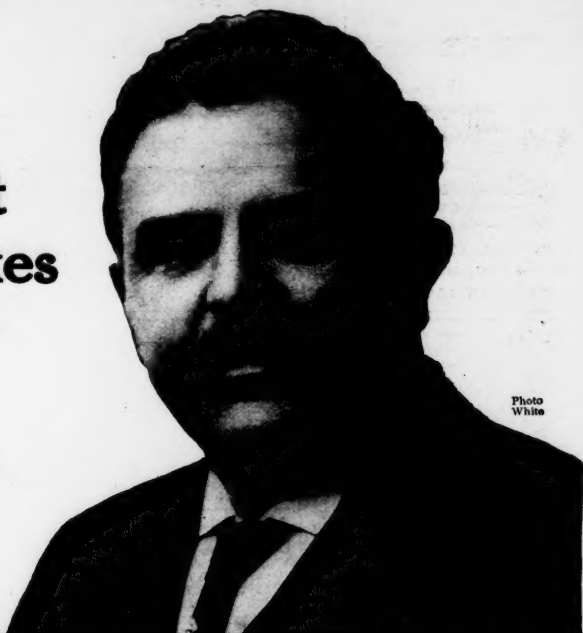


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Vol. XIII

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 6

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

CONTENTS

FOR - SEPTEMBER - 1911

Cover Design	<i>Sigurd Schou</i>	
Theatrical Art Studies		869
Sixteen New Portraits of Footlight Favorites.		
Sister Amanda—A Complete Novel	<i>Anne O'Hagan</i>	885
Illustrated by Harriet Adair Newcomb.		
It's Good to Be Alive This Year—A Sermon	<i>Charles Battell Loomis</i>	913
The Umbrella—A Story	<i>Edward Boltwood</i>	917
Illustrated by G. C. Pugsley.		
Keepsake—A Poem	<i>Chas. C. Jones</i>	923
Manners at Sixty-five—An Essay	<i>Hildegarde Lavender</i>	924
Illustrated by Harriet Adair Newcomb.		
A Match That Struck Fire—A Story	<i>Holman F. Day</i>	929
Illustrated by Victor Perard.		
Exiled—A Poem	<i>Elizabeth Biddlecome</i>	942
Economy—A Nautical Ballad	<i>Wallace Irwin</i>	943
Illustrated by Hy. Mayer.		
The Leveling of the Waters	<i>Adolph Klauber</i>	945
A Story of the Theatre.		
Illustrated by Robt. A. Graef.		
With You—A Poem	<i>Gertrude Brooke Hamilton</i>	951
Uncle William's Industrious Young Man	<i>John D. Swain</i>	952
A Story.		
Illustrated by R. Emmett Owen.		
The Serpent in the House—A Story	<i>Wallace Irwin</i>	959
Illustrated by Hy. Mayer.		
Miss Smallpiece and the Occult—A Story	<i>Edith Summers Updegraff</i>	968
Illustrated by G. C. Pugsley.		
The Buddha and the Birthday Cake—A Story	<i>Nalbro Bartley</i>	975
Illustrated by E. C. Caswell.		
A Play at Parentage—A Story	<i>Courtney Ryley Cooper</i>	985
Illustrated by H. Haygarth Leonard.		
Vanity—A Poem	<i>Ralph M. Thomson</i>	992
Fishing for Miss Foster—A Story	<i>Edwin L. Sabin</i>	993
Illustrated by Laura E. Foster.		
Across the Footlights	<i>Howard Fitzalan</i>	1001
The Trail of the Sheridan Heir	<i>Virginia Middleton</i>	1007
III.—THE AFFAIR OF THE NIGHT RAIDERS.		
Illustrated by Sigurd Schou.		
The Little Person—A Story	<i>Marie de Montalvo</i>	1022
Illustrated by H. M. Bunker.		
How to Prevent and Cure Minor Foot Troubles	<i>Dr. Lillian Whitney</i>	1028
Illustrated with Photographs.		

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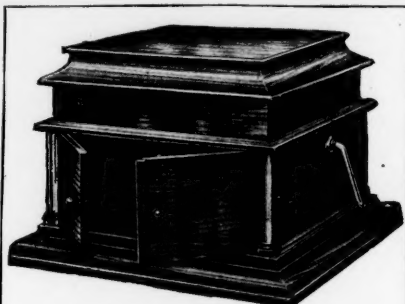
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SMITH'S MAGAZINE

VOLUME 13

SEPTEMBER, 1911

NUMBER 6

PHOTOGRAPHIC ART STUDIES OF STAGE FAVORITES



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IN "MANON LESCAUT"



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In "Salome"

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MISS MARGARET ADAIR
At the Folies Bergere

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MISS ALMA RUSSELL
In "The Rock of Ages"

Photo by Moffett, Chicago



SISTER AMANDA

2^{By}

ANNE O'HAGAN

Author of "Marcia," "Kate Grossett—Comedienne," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRIET ADAIR NEWCOMB

CHAPTER I.

SISTER AMANDA was showing a party through the Community House. They had driven over from the hotel at Siloam Springs, and they had been voluble with delight from the moment when the door of the great square building had afforded them a cool, shadowy sanctuary from the dusty glare of the road. Sister Amanda, most eagerly friendly of souls, enjoyed their enthusiasm. Some of the other sisters, as they listened to the exclamations of visitors, occasionally allowed the placidity of their faces to be marred by expressions of boredom, but Sister Amanda never.

No one, looking upon her ingenuous, homely, withered countenance could suspect her of ever forming the scornful word "gush" in even the most secret depths of her mind. No one, searching the soul that shone through her wistful, bright, spectacled eyes, could suspect it of harboring any doubts of the good faith or any criticisms of the good manners of those to whom she acted as a guide.

Sister Amanda was obviously, therefore, the fitting person to be cicerone of the Community during the influx of summer visitors from the Springs at the north, the Notch at the south, and

all the smaller resorts east and west of the valley—places which fairly mushroomed with boarders during July and August, like a pasture after rain.

In addition to the great gift of never looking bored by the flattering, exclamatory babble of the parties of summer sight-seers, Sister Amanda possessed another attribute which the Siloam brethren and sisters thought desirable in a guide. She could talk fluently by the hour—nay, by the day together—of the beauties and delights of the Siloam Settlement, of the ineffable gifts of her religious beliefs, and of the practical comforts of the Community life. Her utterances had the attractive, persuasive quality that the utterances of an intense, simple belief always have; and the shrewder members of the organization appraised it highly as an agency for conversion, as well as for the more immediately practical purpose of wooing contributions from those whom it impressed.

To Sister Amanda the big, rectangular buildings, slate-colored, unshuttered, staring, were more beautiful than any architect's dream wrought into stone and marble in the old world could have been. She asked to see no fairer landscape than that surrounding Siloam Valley. She had woven it into the very fabric of her religion. In the

morning, when she went to her window, her heart and often her lips cried: "I will look unto the hills from whence cometh my help."

The words of the gorgeous-colored imagery of Solomon's Song were often hers as she looked upon the prim, square gardens of the settlement. She had no definite meaning in her ejaculation, only love for the land that sloped upward to the horizon from the long, narrow valley, and gratitude for the blessings of the valley itself.

"And now," she chirped, on this particular day, "if you will come downstairs, I will show you our stillroom."

Exclaiming that the idea of a stillroom was too perfectly delightful for any words, but, proceeding to express delight in words, the party followed Sister Amanda downstairs. Like every other part of the house, the stillroom was a model of exquisite cleanliness. From its bricked floors one could have eaten with appetite. Sister Amanda explained to an eager inquirer that they were, indeed, washed each day. The benches were scrubbed white, the shelves were spotless; the apparatus for extracting juices was all primitive, homely, but it all had the same beauty as the rest of the establishment—that of shining order, of a religious care.

The sister in charge of the stillroom and her two assistants, close-bonneted, their voluminous, shapeless brown stuff gowns hidden for the moment by their great calico aprons, looked up and gave Sister Amanda's party placid greeting. They proffered tiny sample sips of their wines and cordials.

Shelf after shelf was full of glass bottles and jars, labeled neatly in old-fashioned script with the names of the beverages they contained—elderberry wine, raspberry shrub, blackberry cordial—oh, yes, the goods were for sale! Sister Amanda conveyed the information with such an ingenuous air of offering a priceless opportunity that the visitors smiled from one to another. Yet, though they smiled, their hands sought their pockets and their bags.

"As if everything in the place were not for sale!" scoffingly whispered a

young man of the party, serge-suited, straw-hatted, nonchalant, as he slid a bottle of elderberry wine into the precarious shelter of a coat pocket. He had dropped behind the guide, and spoke to a girl in white duck. "Have you ever encountered such people for a bargain? I wager you that for a fair price I'd be allowed to do the voluble old dame herself up in a parcel and carry her home."

"Would you like her at home?" the girl asked, and, both looking at the broad back of Sister Amanda, at the short cape of her tight, gingham bonnet, the multitude of gathers in her brown skirt beneath her square waistline, they laughed with irresistible glee at the thought of any one's wanting her at home.

Then the girl sighed.

"Poor soul!" she said.

And Sister Amanda, hearing the bubbling laughter and not its epilogue, turned and smiled sympathetically upon the young creatures.

"You're a rich community, are you not?" one of the women asked the little cicerone, when the inspection of the Sisters' House, with all its attendant buying of the sisters' handiwork, was nearly over.

"The Lord has prospered His people," Sister Amanda replied modestly and joyfully.

"Your sect—I mean your division of it here in Siloam—owns most of the valley, does it not?" pursued the interrogator.

"All of it—more than four thousand acres," was Sister Amanda's happy answer.

"How long have you been here?"

"I've been here twenty-one years, when Christmas comes again."

"Oh, but I meant how long had your people been in the valley here?"

"I misunderstood thee. We have been here over a hundred years."

Gilded dukes and belted earls could not have declared their family's tenure of estate more proudly than Sister Amanda that of her religious brethren's of the great communal farm. But

the girl in white duck was gazing at her with startled eyes.

"Twenty-one years!" she murmured. "Why—why, you must have come here when you were quite young!"

Pity and a sort of terrified amazement blended in her voice. Was it possible, she seemed to inquire, that a girl in whose veins life and the desire of life flowed strongly should choose this torpor of existence?

"I was nineteen," answered Sister Amanda simply.

"Nineteen! And ready to give up everything in the world!" The young girl's round eyes studied the plain little sister's face bewilderedly.

"Does thee think I have given up everything in the world? I do not think so. I think I have found everything in the world worth having."

They were coming out of one of the doors into the garden as Sister Amanda spoke. Bed after bed of blazing color, all as prim as the rooms of the house, all as free from weeds as the rooms were free from dust, stretched before them. Beyond these was a vegetable garden, decorous row upon row, beyond that again were grouped barns and outhouses, all firmly set upon rock formations like the great house they had just left, and beyond that again rose another of the uncompromisingly square dwellings.

"What house is that? It looks like the twin of the one we have just left."

"That is the Brethren's House; thee has just been shown the Sisters' House. They are much alike," Sister Amanda answered.

Out from the Brethren's House, past the barns, and into the vegetable garden, there strode at that moment a figure, commanding in spite of the singularity of its attire. It was a man, tall, straight, and broad. A brown smock covered the upper part of his body, hanging in straight, full lines to his hips. A broad-brimmed hat sat squarely upon his head. He seemed to direct two similarly clad figures at work among the vegetables.

"Who is that?" demanded the insatiably curious young girl.

"That is Brother Eli. He manages the farm, he manages the business. He transacts all our affairs with the world's people for us."

Sister Amanda, who spoke proudly, ecstatically, of everything in the Community, from the penwipers and whisk brooms, the jars of pickles, the rag mats, to the peace of a believer's life, naturally spoke with pride of the man who transacted the Community's affairs with those in outer darkness, the world's people.

The youngest member of the party, however, was fitfully romantic, as well as curious. She turned quickly to surprise the expression upon Sister Amanda's wrinkled, homely, little face. With keen eyes fixed upon her, she asked other questions concerning Brother Eli. What business was it he transacted, for example? Oh, the selling of the beeves and sheep that fattened in the valley pastures, the disposal of the great firkins of butter made in the cool, stone dairies, the buying of such grain supplies as the valley did not produce for the wintering of the stock, the banking of the Settlement's funds, and such things.

"And is he never cheated—living, as he does, such a remote, religious life—when he comes in contact with the world's people?" asked the girl.

There was a little, mischievous light in her eyes. Her own small bargaining of the day for little articles of needlework had convinced her that the sisters and brethren were magnificently able to take care of themselves in matters of exchange. But Sister Amanda never suspected satire. Her eyes, behind their big spectacles, glowed with pride.

"Never!" she cried warmly. "Brother Eli, for all his piety, is not one whom the world's people can deceive."

The girl smiled. On the long drive back to the Springs she maintained that she had caught a blush upon the cicerone's face as she had defended Brother Eli from the imputation of gullibility.

"She looked the way my Sunday-

school teacher used to look when the minister came around to see how she was getting along with her class," she declared. "You know they were married afterward. I remember because our class clubbed together and presented them with a large photograph of the Sistine Madonna. They had five others."

"My dear," the girl's mother reminded her, ignoring the incident of the Sistine Madonna, "you seem to forget that this Siloam Settlement is maintained by a celibate sect."

mental attachment to a farm-aqueduct system?"

"Ah!" cried the girl triumphantly. "But she told us that Brother Eli was the inventor of the farm-aqueduct system. Indeed, now that I come to think about it, everything good on the place seemed to be the invention of Brother Eli. Since she was nineteen! And contented! No one can doubt that she is contented—more than contented! Think of it!"

No one could possibly doubt that Sister Amanda was contented. The older



There was frank loitering among the graves in the churchyard on the part of the youths and maidens.

"I didn't mean to imply that the little sister was going to run away with the big brother with the long beard—did you notice the length of his beard?—but only that she was in love with him," explained the girl airily. "Marrying hasn't been a necessary corollary of love since early Victorian fiction, mother, dear!"

"You're away off," declared the young man in the serge suit, who sat holding his elderberry wine across his knees. "She had exactly the same beatific expression of countenance when she was showing us the pipping to the troughs in the stable. You don't mean to tell me that she has a senti-

members of the Community remembered the radiant dawn of that spirit of joyful appreciation for which content seemed almost too cold a word. Twenty-one years ago she had come to the services one Sunday from a hill village near by—merely one of an idle group of sight-seers, sensation seekers. Like the others of her party, she had sat in the bare meeting room, and had listened with scarcely repressed giggles, half of excitement, half of an ignorant sense of superiority, to the progress of the service.

But, by and by, when the oldest among the sisters of that bygone day had arisen, and in her tremulous old

voice had described the beauty of a life freed from all carnal desires, gradually there had come a change over the face of the listening girl. Her giggling had ceased. She had moved impatiently when a companion had whispered to her some jocular comment upon the graceless garb of the sisters. Her nearsighted eyes had been bent with a close, frowning attention upon the aged speaker. She had felt some change working within herself.

"And when the desire for earthly love goes," the old voice had asked, "what goes with it? Jealousy that spitefully dreads the greater attraction of another, meanness and deceit that would belittle that greater attraction, loneliness and pain, and the fear of loneliness and pain."

The country girl, listening, had drawn a long breath. The words were meant for her, she had felt. Before she left the Settlement that day she had bought many of the little pamphlets expounding the tenets of the faith. Her friends had laughed at her, but not even their loud mirth, though she had always been rarely sensitive to ridicule, could pierce through the veil of interest in which she was enveloped, or reach her vulnerable heart. She had driven all the way home in a sort of daze, for once scarcely aware of the lonely part she played among her comrades. Usually she had been one hot, suffering blush of self-consciousness at her beauless condition; in her village, the whole business, the whole pleasure, of the young was in the tentative approaches toward mating.

Twenty-one years of happiness had banished from Sister Amanda's mind the recollection of that shamed, unwooded, wistful youth of hers. Yet it had been that youth which had driven her into the Settlement, not from any conscious desire to reach haven, any deliberate attempt to escape torment, but from the instinctive necessity by which every creature is impelled to frame a philosophy to fit his wishes or his limitations. It is not only the lower animals which change their color to protect themselves against the changing

lines of their environment. The human animal also as undeliberately dons strange garments of belief and of behavior in order to save himself pain.

Amanda, back there in Ramsey a miserable quarter of a century before, had been, it seemed to her, the only unsought creature in the universe. It was not because she was amorous or passionate, poor, plain, little girl, that she had bewailed her lot; the only stirring toward the masculine beings of her acquaintance she ever felt was the stirring of an innocent feminine vanity that hated to be unlike all the world.

And in Ramsey all the world of Amanda's age was "courting." They married early out there—society did not afford them diversions which relegated the real business of life to a secondary place, or delayed it unduly; the men worked hard on their farms; they needed a woman's help—they needed the help of sons and daughters. And so they married early, and so a girl in that country had scarcely more than entered her fifteenth or sixteenth year before she was ripe for wooing.

There was much "buggy riding" on moonlit summer nights, much sleigh riding when the hills were wrapped in snow. After church on Sunday there was frank loitering among the graves in the churchyard on the part of the youths and maidens. There were bucolic jests on subjects that a more fastidious society has declared to be too sacred or too intimate for jesting—on kisses, on endearments. The ribbons which the girls wore were boldly named with the same bucolic humor. "Fellow, come and follow me" was a shoulder knot that the shyest girl in Ramsey wore with rosy, provocative daring.

And by and by all the crude young love-making, all the undisguised testing and trying, all the advancing, and retreating, came to its destined end, and a new set of sober matrons sat in church on Sunday, washed on Monday, ironed on Tuesday, baked on Wednesday, and took up the whole busy, unromantic round of the countrywoman's life, while the next set of girls and

boys was advanced to the buggy-riding, sleigh-riding, church-dallying stage of social intercourse.

In all of that Amanda had had no part at all. It was not that she was homelier than girls who had scandalized the community by the flirtatiousness of their "goings on," though she was homely. But in Ramsey, as in most other places, there were as many standards of beauty as there were young men and young women, and no girl ever went unknissed, unwooed, unwed, merely because she was plain. But to Amanda's plainness had been added a fatal, undefinable thing—the utter lack of any lure of sex.

Young men nodded to her, said a quick "Howdy, Mandy," and hurried past her to reach some siren of a homeliness that was positive where Amanda's was merely negative. They brushed past her, neat and careful in her attire, to join some girl whose lack of buttons, lack of pins and strings, proclaimed with noisy tongue that she would make a miserable housekeeper. They pushed by her, with her timid, little smile that promised good temper, gratitude, devotion, to spend themselves upon a virago. They always passed her by.

At sixteen it had not troubled Amanda seriously. She was still a child at heart in spite of the conversation that she heard every day when her mother and her aunt, two widows, sat together. That was all of "company keeping," of "paying attention," of marrying and giving in marriage, of trousseaus—they called them "wedding sets" in Ramsey—and of cradles. She used to glance shyly at the advancing boys even then, at church or sociable, at husking bee or at supper after the quilting parties, to see if, perhaps, this time, the wonderful thing for which the world existed was about to happen to her. However, when the youth invariably hurried on to Patty or Mollie beyond her, she felt no qualms of anger or jealousy or fear, but bore her part cheerfully enough in the work or the merrymaking.

But when she was turned seventeen,

and no buggy had ever stood before her mother's hitching post on a Sunday afternoon, she began to know the cold, bitter taste of fear. Then there crept into her eyes the look, half fright, half appeal, which never entirely left them, even when she was a happy, self-assured woman. Her mother and her aunt spoke in her presence—nay, to her—of her unpopularity with the boys. They scolded her; she was too standoffish, they declared their conviction; and yet they knew, even before Amanda could deny the charge, that she had never had the glorious opportunity to be standoffish.

They bade her model herself upon this girl and that, but Amanda, terrified at the thought of failure, never followed their advice. It was bad enough—it was awful—to fail without having made a definite and special effort to succeed, but oh, what ignominy would it be to try, to put forth every effort and still to fail!

The girls whom she knew best talked to her about her lack of attention with interested frankness.

"Funny you don't get a beau, Mandy," they commented, snipping their threads with their sharp, white teeth, or rounding a heel of a stocking. "You're as good-looking as most, and you're a first-rate housekeeper. Men are blind things, ain't they? I guess you ain't lively enough to suit them. Why don't you talk more, laugh more? Not that I'd mind if I was you. There was Miss Ellen Douglas—she didn't have the sign of a beau until she was thirty, and then, if you please, a gentleman who came to visit the minister fell in love with her, and married her, and took her away to the city. I reckon that's the way it's going to be with you, Mandy. But even if you are an old maid, I don't see that you'll need to cry over it. Look at the married folks you see—they ain't so happy, as far as I can make out, that it ought to break any one's heart not to get married."

But this optimistic view of the case did not raise Amanda's spirits or blind her to the fact that she was a failure in the one department of life in which fail-



"Funny you don't get a beau, Mandy."

ure is, to a woman, most bitter. She would have avoided the meetings and the merrymakings, had she been able to do so, so grievous to her was the contrast between her own condition and that of the other girls whom she knew. She would have avoided the sweet spring evenings, the white summer nights, with their whispers of air and of perfume that were like the soft words and laughter of lovers.

But in Ramsey it was as impossible to avoid the simple social life as the changing seasons, and day by day, night by night, for the three years after she had come to womanhood, as Ramsey interpreted it, did Amanda suffer the silent torture of the feminine human being who is unsought.

And then had come the hint of another standard at the Sunday meeting she had attended for a "lark." She had come like the rest of the group to scoff; she remained to pray. She had expected, in so far as she expected anything, to be amused at the strange dress, the untrimmed beards, the tight, concealing bonnets, the quaint speech, of the Siloam brethren and sisters. She found herself stirred by a profound emotion. She did not see the

sartorial peculiarities which afforded her companions such mirth; the curious mysticism of the creed which the services revealed, the utter lack of ceremonial, appealed to something in the depths of her soul. And that tenet of the faith which made celibacy, the reproach of a woman in Ramsey, an honor, an ornament, a high virtue, excited her with hopes that she could not understand.

Back at home she had read the strange, thin, little paper-backed pamphlets, with their mixture of simplicity and fantasy; she thought that she could understand even the most occult, the most involved, of the doctrines. In reality, the one that interested her, that filled her with hope and with satisfaction, was the doctrine that the unmarried life was more acceptable to Heaven than the fruitful life of the world.

She tramped the long miles between Ramsey and the Siloam Settlement Sunday after Sunday—her mother tartly refused to let her have the horse for driving on any such errand as that!—to hear the comforting words spoken in the soft, placid voices of the sisters and brethren. She tramped

thither on week days to sit at the feet of old Sister Ruth, who had first spoken the vivifying doctrine in her hearing.

"But how," she asked, "was the order to be replenished if it did not permit marriage among its members?"

And Sister Ruth gave her comforting statistics of conversion—the conversion of fathers and mothers who came with their whole broods, and, seeing a light brighter than that of earthly love, dwelt side by side as spiritual brethren, while their children grew up in the faith; conversions of spinsters and bachelors, of widows and widowers.

She spoke of orphans adopted into the society and raised by it. Had Amanda noticed Brother Eli? He had been one of the orphans; and see him now—fine, strong in the faith, working for it. Only twenty-four and already he had five conversions to his credit. Oh, the replenishment of the Settlement was not difficult. And by and by all the world would come into it.

"Would not the world shortly thereafter cease?" was Amanda's natural question.

And then she heard much strange, mystical talk of a newly constructed world, a world of spiritual bodies, of spiritual unions; she heard of visions and special revelations that promised this new world. And she felt, ecstatically, that she would like to live in it. Finally she went away one day, pledged to break to her mother the news that she intended to join the colony.

The opposition that she encountered had, of course, the inevitable effect of opposition. She was a martyr—a martyr for the sake of a belief, a religion. She was more than ever set upon having her own way in the matter—it was a demand of her conscience that she should have it.

And at last there happened what always happens when conscience meets prejudice; conscience had its own way. Amanda's mother and her aunt, her girl friends, her family connection, all bewailed her infatuation, but they were forced to yield to it. Her mother told

her sternly that not a pennyworth of her money should go to supporting a wicked sect that put themselves above nature and the Bible, and taught young girls to defy parental rule, and Amanda had been a little chilled by the announcement.

She knew that the unworldly saints whom she was joining united a shrewd conception of a dollar's value to their mystical beliefs; she knew that they would like to take even the little that she had expected to bring them into their common melting pot.

But they had accepted her penniless as kindly and as fully as if she had come with her small dower. And when her mother had died, she had learned that, after all, she was an heiress in a tiny, Ramsey way; her mother had only held the little property in trust. So that she was able to make some financial return for the ten years of happiness, of busy life, of beautiful belief, that she had enjoyed.

She thought about it all on the day when the party from the Springs had visited the Community. Twenty-one years—every one of them joyful, rich, satisfied! What woman living "in the world" could say as much? What other religion offered such completion of life, of bliss, to its children? They were very happy, she supposed, those two young things whose glances she had surprised in the stillroom; they were happy, and young, and in love. By and by they would wed, after the manner of the world's people. But would they ever know such rapture as she had known?

During the summer season when visitors were many, the cicerone was relieved from a good deal of the physical labor that formed part of the Community life. Sister Amanda, when not on duty showing and describing the charms and wonders of the place, sat a good deal in the office, arranging the literature in neat little piles, pasting up the scrapbooks, inventing new literature; for Amanda, the fervent believer, had learned incoherently but rapturously to express her fervent belief, and was an author of sorts.

To-day she was stirred to write a poem contrasting the joys which the white-clad girl and the serge-suited boy were likely to experience with those of the brethren and sisters. She walked to the window of the office, seeking inspiration. Her eager eyes, behind her spectacles, deepened with happiness as she looked out upon the rolling beauty of the far landscape, the busy peace and prosperity of her immediate vicinity.

A boy, slim and tall beneath the disfiguring smock, ran to open the great farmyard gate. Brother Eli, erect and vigorous upon the seat of an open wagon, drove out; his pair of horses shone in the sunlight; it was one of the trials of the world's people at Siloam that the un-world's people owned the finest horses, the best cattle, for miles about.

All the vanity which the tenets of their creed made them forswear in their own persons seemed to be expended upon their stock. A more beautifully matched, more shiningly groomed pair never lifted their feet at the Springs itself than those which Brother Eli was driving now with that air of horsemanship which no strangeness of garb could conceal.

Amanda's eyes deepened as she looked. A little smile, proud and tender, parted her thin lips.

"Sure enough!" she said aloud. "He's going to Lorimer to the bank. It is the fifteenth."

An automobile, blowing a raucous challenge, swept dustily along the road. It slowed down as it approached the Community buildings. Brother Eli was holding his horses in check while he gave some last directions to the tall boy. He looked up as the automobile came to halt by him. Amanda made out a parley between him and the party it contained. She caught the color of floating veils, the brightness of white linen coats. One girl was bareheaded in the hot sun, she noticed; her hair shone like copper, and even from the window Amanda could see how it blew in curls about her ears and temples.

"They are coming here," she said,

as the parley ceased and the machine came slowly toward the entrance which Brother Eli had indicated. "I'll have to show them around. I'll have to give up my poem, and the inspiration may be gone when I come back. I'm sorry—Amanda, thee has an ungrateful heart! Rejoice, rejoice, to show our work, to preach our gospel, whenever thee canst."

Nevertheless, as she walked toward the door, her feet lagged. And her eyes sought the window once again. Brother Eli was driving rapidly down the road, straight and massive in broad-brimmed hat and shapeless smock.

CHAPTER II.

The causes which had brought Laurene Sanford to Ramsey's Mills that summer seemed to her and to her employers perfectly obvious, although these chief parties to the transaction did not happen to have the same set of causes in mind. The Snowdens, who ran Ramsey's Mills, halfway between Siloam Springs and Ramsey, thought that Miss Sanford was part of their office force that summer because her recommendation had been highly satisfactory, and because the man whom she replaced had been unsatisfactory in the high degree denoted by his walking off with some checks which did not belong to him.

The Snowdens had always held the view that their head stenographer must be a man—some one "available for promotion"—and it never occurred to them to think of a woman as available for promotion to any official in their conservative concern. But the experience with the defaulting young man had changed their point of view. Therefore, to them it was quite evident that Laurene Sanford was at Ramsey's Mills for the perfectly sufficient reason that she had been the first of the applicants for the position whom they tried out, whose manner, references, and work were all alike satisfactory. This statement concerns only Miss Sanford's business manner, which was efficient and assured to the point of

insolence; about her social manner the Snowden brothers took no thought.

Laurene herself thought, or at any rate said, that she went to Ramsey's Mills in order to get a change of air without its costing her too much. Probably not even to herself did she say that she went to Ramsey's Mills because Tom Keenan "had thrown her down."

It remained for her friends and associates to say that, and they did with a thoroughness which gave them great satisfaction. Of course he had thrown her down! Why wouldn't he? So ran the unsparing chatter at Brompton's where she had worked. Did she think that a man like Tom—a grown, responsible man, thirty years old, none of your crazy boys—was going to stand for the things that the others had stood for, who had aspired to the position of keeping company with her?

Why, Tom was earning his thirty a week, and every one prophesied that by the time he was forty he'd be in the company. What was she thinking of to imagine she could play fast and loose with him as she had done with all the rest? Tom Keenan wasn't the sort of man to keep waiting at an elevated station when you promised to meet him there for a day's excursion out to Bronx Park; and every one knew that Laurene had done that, and had laughed and pretended that she had forgotten all about the engagement. And he nearly sick with the fear she'd been run over or hurt on her way there!

But he had forgiven that, and half a dozen other incidents like it. It was only when she had turned up at the dance of the Brompton Employees' Mutual Benefit and Pleasure Association with Harry Loomis, after she had told Tom she didn't feel like going—it was only then that matters had come to an end between them.

The girls at Brompton's remembered the evening well; it was their closing entertainment for the season, and the April night was warm and close. Colors had wilted easily, and curls had straightened out into damp strings—

unless one happened to be the mean, unsisterly sort of a person whose hair only curls tighter for every dampness!

Laurene was one of these. When she had finally appeared at the dance, her shining copper hair was a mass of irresistible puffs and curls. Her cheeks were flushed and dewy, thanks to the warmth of the evening and her delicious sense of daring and defiance. And her pale-green organdie was crisp and cool as lettuce leaves, when all the other girls had begun to look limp and dejected.

Harry Loomis had grinned from ear to ear like a fatuous fool in his pride, and Tom had turned toward the door as the little buzz of surprise which greeted Laurene's advent had reached him. How his eyes had darkened, his forehead had frowned! With what swift, determined steps he advanced toward her! How impertinently she had looked up at him and had laughed—yet those who knew her best declared that they had seen a sudden fright in her eyes.

And how Tom had elbowed the foolish Harry aside, and had taken Laurene out of earshot for an explanation! How thrilling and magnificent it had been when he had ceremoniously returned her to her "gentleman escort," and had bowed to her as one who washed his hands finally of a responsibility!

Opinion was divided among the girls at Crompton's as to whether or not the affair between Tom and Laurene was definitely off from the moment when he had restored her to Harry with such a Grandisonian air of irony. Some declared that, from that moment, Laurene with all her charm could never have whistled Tom back again, while others were fervently of the opinion that the quarrel might have been patched up even then, had it not been for her behavior during the rest of the evening. It was universally admitted that she had simply outLaurened herself, flirting more desperately, more outrageously, than ever before; and her past had not been guiltless of flirtation, conspicuous and daring.

And the next day Tom had paused at little Myrtle Dawson's desk for several chats, and the girl who had sat next had heard him make an engagement with her for the evening. The girl who sat next, being merely human, could not forbear from hurrying to Laurene with the tidings. She reported that Laurene's eyes had belied the mocking laugh with which she had received the information.

"Myrtle Dawson, is it?" she had laughed. "She's welcome to him as long as she can keep him. That'll be about three days. But it's too bad of Tom to go around raising the hopes of a girl that's never had any attention, when he doesn't mean a thing by it. It's really too bad of him."

But by the end of the week it was known that Tom was keeping "steady company" with Myrtle, and by the end of a fortnight that they were to be married in June.

"Just waiting long enough for Myrtle to get her things together," some one told Laurene importantly in the cloakroom one day. She declared afterward that she was frightened for a moment by the look Laurene turned upon her.

That they were not married in June had not been due to any baleful charm which Laurene had been able to exert. It was due only to the fact that Myrtle's father had inexplicably failed to get up to go to work one morning, and that investigation showed that he would never go again; he had had a stroke during the night. Next to her father, Myrtle earned more than any other member of the family, which contained five children below the earning age. Naturally Myrtle could not be spared at such a moment for any matrimonial purpose. Tom's thirty a week, however ample for a young couple of modest ambitions, would scarcely suffice for a family of ten, one of whom was suddenly become a hopeless invalid. Perhaps by next year—so Myrtle's hopes ran.

If Laurene had any selfish expectation that Myrtle's ill fortune might redound to her own advantage—for no

one ever doubted that Laurene, in spite of her willfulness, really cared for Tom—the expectation was speedily quenched. Tom was a more devoted lover to Myrtle in trouble than he had been to Myrtle, important, patronizing, blandly satisfied with existence and primly superior to young women who awakened infatuations in masculine bosoms, but not lasting affection—Myrtle did not, perhaps, use such quite ornate language to explain away Laurene, but what she said meant that.

And so Laurene had suddenly announced one day that she was leaving Brompton and all the lure of the big city, and was going to take a vacation in the backwoods. And she departed, wearing a lavender linen with her unconquerable air of dash, and flashing all sorts of gay, defiant messages from her bold, pretty eyes beneath the exaggeratedly upstanding brim of her black chip hat.

"I guess she'll make the rubes sit up and take some notice," observed one young man, who afterward declared that he wouldn't have said it if he had known that Tom Keenan was standing beside him.

For Tom had certainly "looked queer" as he caught the last glimpse of the bright, departing figure, and queerer still as he overheard the prophetic utterance in regard to Laurene's probable effect upon the masculine part of the rural community. However, he was very helpfully devoted to Myrtle all the afternoon.

These then were the reasons why Miss Laurene Sanford was acting as head stenographer at the paper factory of the Snowden Brothers in Ramsey's Mills. She boarded in a pleasant house a half mile from the works. Like most of the pleasant houses in the valley, it eked out its small agricultural income by a flourishing industry in summer boarders. Somewhat to Laurene's disgust, these were mainly women of settled years and habits.

However little congeniality there was between her and the good ladies who, among themselves, exchanged embroidery patterns and observations



And she departed, wearing a lavender linen with her unconquerable air of dash, and flashing all sorts of gay, defiant messages from her bold, pretty eyes.

on the varying cost of living in Montclair and Brooklyn, the necessities of the case forced a certain degree of intimacy upon them. The ladies, of course, did not approve of Laurene; her gowns were at once too dashing and too flimsy, and they thought that a somewhat similar criticism applied to her conversation and her manners.

Nevertheless they admitted her to their circle when her occupation at the mills permitted. They grudgingly acknowledged that her presence, her voice, her laugh, her anecdotes, her little snatches of song, gave an element of liveliness to their gatherings which might otherwise have been missing.

And when their husbands or their sons came to Ramsey's Mills for Sundays or for holidays, Laurene was always included in the more splendid festivities of these occasions—the automobile trips, the coaching parties through the hills to one local point of interest and another, the moonlight straw rides, the small regattas on the little hill-circled lake back of Ramsey's Mills.

And Laurene, chafing against the dullness of the life, nevertheless felt its

healthful influences. In spite of the pain that gnawed at her heart when she thought of Tom and of Myrtle, in spite of the anger and resentment she harbored, the feverish tremors of hope and the sick chills of despair—in spite of all the wasting emotions to which she was a prey, she grew each day stronger physically, more rosy, more brilliant of eyes, more buoyant of figure. Youth, the unconquerable, labored with the tonic air of the hills to make her superb.

The day when the boarders at Mrs. Fervert's went automobiling to the Siloam Settlement was one of Laurene's wildest days. She felt within herself a vigor that could lift the hills; and yet she could not force one man to write her a little letter! Well, if he was a poor, blind fool who could not see what he was losing for the sake of his silly old dignity, there were other men with eyes. So she told herself when, a fruitless tramp through the sun to the post office having brought her no letter, she flung herself upon Mrs. Fervert's piazza again.

It was a half holiday at Snowden

Brothers'—they were sentimental gentlemen who celebrated their wedding anniversaries by allowing their employees half a day off.

There was a callow stripling on the porch, the adored son of a widowed mother. Laurene tried her noisy fascinations upon him for a few minutes; he succumbed. The stout, phlegmatic husband of one of the perpetual embroiderers, at Ramsey's Mills for his two weeks of recreation during the year, awakened from a good-natured lethargy and bantered with her.

"Oh, let's do something!" she had cried, when she grew tired of the badinage. "That is, if there's anything to do around here!"

"Have you been to see the Siloam Settlement yet?" inquired the youth—and the deed was done.

Laurene wanted to see them, opined that it would be "too funny for any words," and when some one suggested a coöperatively hired automobile for the trip—the wives and mothers at Mrs. Fervert's were outspoken in their admiration of a universal "Dutch-treat" policy for festivities involving any expenses—she was enchanted.

She would not wear a hat, only tying a silvery bright veil over the ruddy splendor of her hair. Her skin had been ever so faintly browned by the weeks of country sunshine, and her white waist opened low on her round, firm throat, like a child's sailor blouse. She was splendidly vital, and the men looked at her appreciatively, the women speculatively, as they whirled through the countryside.

As for Laurene herself, she was a creature of moods at all times, but during this summer of her jilting she was more impulsive, more moody than ever before. She started off in wild spirits, but they spent themselves before a half hour passed. She tired of the sport of mother baiting—the callow youth was really not worth the trouble. She did not particularly care to undertake the sport of wife baiting—the wife of the phlegmatic man looked grimly able to cope with such a situation.

The scenery made a sort of emo-

tional appeal to her; the violet shadows on the hills, scudding swiftly like the dark-rimmed clouds of which they were the reflections, fitted themselves to some vague images of life she remembered having once read. Everything was unsubstantial—everything: happiness, love, gayety, existence itself, were no more real than those swift-blown shadows cast by the vaporous clouds!

In this unaccustomed state of pensiveness—for Laurene's melancholy was usually widely enough separated from thoughtfulness—she first saw Brother Eli as he started for town. The callow youth, hoisting a pale-gray trouser leg to give the world a better opportunity of viewing the lavender socks that matched his lavender-striped shirt and his lavender necktie, found in the long-bearded, queer-hatted, smocked figure a subject for just the sort of witticism of which he was most capable. He addressed it to Laurene, as to a fellow spirit.

Laurene dismissed it without even the tribute of a smile. The man knew how to handle his horses, she said—which happened to be a retort difficult for the lavender youth to bear; he had taken Laurene to drive behind a livery hack the other evening, and it was her cool head and her strong, capable wrists that had saved them from disaster when a motor monster, with enormous searchlight eyes, had glided suddenly out of a forest and into a highroad.

"Come now, Miss Laurene," objected the offended lavender youth; "I shouldn't have thought an old guy like that a bit your style!"

"Shouldn't you?" replied Laurene calmly. "There isn't much safe betting on what a girl's style may be, you know!"

There was a note of boredom in her insolent voice. The youth's mother sprang to the rescue of her progeny.

"I hope you won't let your interest in the style go too far, Miss Laurene," she advised acidly. "They don't believe in marrying at all, the brethren and sisters don't."

"Don't they really?" cried Laurene, with a real interest animating her manner.

It continued to sparkle in her eyes when the machine snorted itself to a standstill, and the party, piling out, were greeted by Sister Amanda, fresh from beginning her poem.

The new party followed in the steps of the former, from one department of the Community to another, but Laurene walked close beside Sister Amanda, and seldom removed her attentive gaze from the plain, withered face of the eager, little exponent of the joys of the life of the Community. Her vocabulary filled the girl with a sort of envious admiration; Laurene was proficient in the slang of her day and in the stereotyped forms of business correspondence such as Brompton's used to use and the Snowden Brothers now employed. She knew, too, the limited language of the cheap novel, the cheap love story.

But Sister Amanda's flow of remarkable words, explanatory of the beliefs of the sect which she represented, was something outside Laurene's experience. It commanded her respect. She could not understand it, and was ignorant of the fact that no one on earth could comprehend it. She attributed her failure to her own limited knowledge, not to any lack of meaning in the fine, mouth-filling words which Sister Amanda poured forth so happily.

As for Sister Amanda, if she had looked with half-sympathetic eyes upon the young lovers of the morning expedition, upon Laurene she turned an expression of mingled adoration and appeal. These were the emotions which physical beauty in women always aroused in her. She had for loveliness of person in her own sex the passionate admiration of a plain woman who is not a rival of that loveliness.

Had she lived "in the world," back there at Ramsey, and had she seen herself year after year passed by in favor of her own more attractive contemporaries, she might have felt merely envy, merely bitterness, at the sight of

vivid cheeks and graciously curved young bodies. But she had placed herself outside the area of competition, and she was ungrudging in her admiration of youth at its most colorful, most radiant, height. To her wistful, spectacled gaze, Laurene, with her glorious coppery hair, the large, bold prettiness of her face clouded a little just now, and therefore softened and improved by her melancholy, seemed the most glorious vision that had ever walked into the prim, spotless corridors of the Sisters' House.

And as she marked, with a flattered, tremulous sense of unbelief, that the girl listened to her respectfully, asked questions of her as of a superior, was silent without mockery before her involved explanations of doctrine, a daring hope sprang to life in her unambitious breast.

What a convert would this girl be! What a triumph to win such a one—alive, abounding with health, with hope, with joy, with possibilities—what a triumph to win such a one to the sect! Her heart beat more swiftly at the thought. Zealous as she was, happy as she had always been in her life in the Community, devoutly as she believed the doctrines that her lips spoke so trippingly, nevertheless, she was aware in some stratum of her mind that the recruits of the Settlement were not usually drawn from the successful wrestlers with life beyond its boundaries.

No, the few converts that were made to the cause were rather of the great army of the defeated—women broken-hearted, forsaken perhaps, women like herself not armed with the weapons for conquest in the woman's fight out there in the world; men who, for one reason or another, could not play gallant parts in the great game of life as it was played beyond the peaceful acres of the Siloam Settlement; these and the orphan children who were caught in one protective net or another, or the children of the few adult converts—these were all who came to the Siloam Community. And they won rather by weariness of the battle outside than by

that fervor for proselyting that glowed in her. What a glory to win one like this girl walking here beside her!

Her hand, almost as thin as a bird's claw, and with the quick, eager movements of a bird; went out toward Laurene's smooth, plump, well-manicured one. What a triumph that would be! What commendation she, plain little Sister Amanda, would win! All the brethren and sisters would praise her, would perhaps envy her the gift which they all admitted she possessed.

Brother Eli, who never failed to render her due homage for all her accomplishments—her pamphlets, her poems, her testimonials in the meetings—Brother Eli would admire her more highly than ever. Hope, determination, the sweet savor of anticipated success, flushed her cheeks, made her voice tremulous, shook her whole being.

And Brother Eli, driving toward town behind his well-matched pair, forgot to feel his usual pride in them, forgot to feel his usual pride in himself as the man who could meet the men of the world on their own exchanges and could bargain better than they. Before his eyes, as he traveled the hot, dusty highroad, or drove through the dim coolness of the wood stretches, was the vision of a young woman, strong, supple, shining from the top of her copper-colored hair with its dazzling twist of silvery-white veiling, to the white toe of the canvas shoe he had seen swinging negligently in the tonneau of the automobile.

So violent, so absorbing, was the emotion which had seized Brother Eli, that at first he was not sufficiently aware of himself in contradistinction from it to fight against it. It was not until he was driving home again through the cooling afternoon, not until he became suddenly conscious that his keen eyes were scanning the road far ahead in the hope of again seeing that white and gold vision of youth and health, that he realized where his thoughts had been.

Horried, he tried to exorcise the demon. He broke into a familiar hymn, and sought to keep his mind

firmly fixed upon its words. But by and by the words died away on his lips. And as the moon rose, slim and nebulously white in a sky not yet darkened, he listened to a seductive song, languid, and passionate, and sweet, whose words floated to him from a buggy crawling slowly along the road toward him. He strained his ears.

"O heart of my heart, on the cliffs by the sea," rang out a clear, young voice, "neath the graves in the grass, I am waiting for thee."

The words were meaningless to him; he had never seen the sea; he had never waited, never longed, in the course of his forty-odd years of busy, practical, sternly religious living. Yet, listening, as he drove back to the Community through the scented summer evening, he felt as though the long-drawn notes of the singer in the buggy expressed the deepest yearning of his nature.

That night Brother Eli wrestled with himself, and with temptation. That night Sister Amanda prayed fervently that her lips might be touched with fire so that she should speak words persuasive to the bright-colorful girl whose hand had closed kindly and firmly on her appealing one that afternoon. And that night, Laurene, who was given neither to wrestling nor to prayer, went to bed with a curious interest in her unformed, uneducated, unethical, little mind concerning the peaceful Community she had that day visited.

"They might take me to board," she concluded, dimpling in the darkness at the idea. "They're keen enough for the money—that shows they've got some sense. And they would surely do it if they thought they might convert me. Well, maybe they could. Some of that stuff the scrawny little sister party talked sounded sort of interesting, though it sure was queer. I wonder are Tom and Myrtle married yet? It's mighty funny none of the girls at Brompton's write to me. Gee! This would be a religion I'd like to convert Myrtle Dawson to!"

Perhaps, if the Snowden Brothers

had manufactured something other than paper, the situation might not have developed as it did. But that was the product in which the excellent gentlemen dealt; and paper is a commodity of which even religious sects have frequently great need.

Almost all the other necessities of life the brethren and sisters produced upon their own acres; they lived in an almost primitive industrial state, raising and weaving much of their own wool, cobbling their own shoes in the shoe shop, making and mending their harnesses and many of their tools.

What they could not actually raise and manufacture for themselves, they purchased in as nearly raw condition as possible, and made it up. They had a clumsy hand press, on which they did their own printing, turning out more pamphlets and leaflets than would have sufficed to convert the world, could the world have been induced to read them with the proper mental attitude. The paper for the production of this literature was one of the things they had to buy.

Snowden Brothers sold them "seconds" at a low rate, and it was Brother Eli's province to try to induce the Snowdens to lower that low rate with each new order for paper.

Two days after his first sight of Laurene, he drove his chestnut pair up before the low brick office of the Snowden Paper Mill. By a species of spiritual flagellation, by a fever of overwork, by a determined grappling with all the material problems of the Community, he had succeeded in banishing the vision that had troubled him. He had not left space in his mind for the bright, provocative figure. And that morning, after a long sleep which was partly induced by physical exhaustion, he arose, calm, master of himself, no longer a prey to powerful, long-thwarted impulses.

It had been in pursuance of his determination to keep busy, to allow himself no leisure for sins of the imagination, as he sternly called his memory of the girl in white, that he drove into Ramsey's Mills that afternoon.

He and some others in authority had decreed that it was time a fresh and enlarged edition of Sister Amanda's poems and essays should be printed. The latest one was three years old, and as Sister Amanda by no means held with the Horatian theory that a poem should lie mellowing, as it were, for nine years, and, as her muse was an indefatigable one, she was all prepared to feed to the press new material.

And there were other writers among the brethren and sisters, other seers of visions and dreamers of dreams, whose "experiences" were deemed worthy of permanent record.

Moreover, the Community was out of the price slips which instructed summer guests in the cost of all the jars of shining preserves, the bottles of fruit cordials, the brooms and brushes, the pincushions, the aprons, and the long, enveloping cloaks of beautiful woollen cloth. It was clearly necessary for Brother Eli to visit the paper factory that afternoon.

He alighted in front of the one-storied brick office, about which the taller buildings of the works were clustered. He marked the bright, prim, borders, and star-shaped plots of gay-colored "bedding-out" plants with which the Snowdens sought to relieve the grimness of their surroundings; there was a faint powdering of black dust upon the cannas and gladioli from the tall chimneys of the factory and from the railroad engines which passed on the tracks a few hundred yards distant.

Brother Eli was not a sentimentalist, and did not particularly mourn the marring of the blossoms, but he did feel a glow of pride at the thought that the Community's flower beds were never darkened thus.

He hitched his horses, and, for extra security, dropped a heavy weight on the narrow sidewalk. Then he strode into the office; he was about to do that which gave him more pleasure than anything else in life, although he was far from realizing the relative place of his pleasures; he was about to bargain shrewdly and advantageously with one

of the "world's people." He squared his broad shoulders, held his fine head higher, and the deep, unclouded, steely blue of his eyes took on a new depth of color. And thus he advanced upon his fate.

Laurene wore her favorite pale green; any woman, appraising it, would have called it cheap and flimsy, would have scorned the coarse lace that trimmed it too profusely, would have known for meretricious its whole air of dash and "smartness." But Brother Eli saw only the exquisite color, the fresh crispness of the frock, the beautiful glow of the hair piled high above the pretty face, the satiny texture of the warm-tinted skin.

Laurene had a glass of nasturtiums on the desk before her, and one of the flame-colored blossoms was between her lips. She was almost blinding to his eyes. And she was the vision that had possessed him for two days. He could scarcely credit his sight; he was not sure that she was not a temptation of the devil incarnated before him.

As for Laurene, she recognized him, and the smile she gave him was not one of mirth for his habiliments, though these in truth seemed ridiculous enough to her, but one of admiration—she remembered how he had held his horses in check on the day of her visit to the Community.

"No," she replied in answer to the question he finally forced himself to put to her, "Mr. Snowden is not at the office to-day. Mr. Will Snowden is somewhere in the works, however, and will soon be back." Meantime could she give him any information?

She could not, Brother Eli declared firmly. He would hold no parley with her. He sat down to await the arrival of Mr. William Snowden with his back turned squarely to the bright figure. Laurene tapped the keys of her typewriter in unconcern. She hummed a little as she adjusted sheets of paper or ran through the leaves of her notebook. The tune sounded to him like that one he had heard the other evening, and his mind fitted the words of passionate longing to it.

She broke off, and addressed him a commonplace about the weather. He answered monosyllabically. She said that she would look up the delayed Mr. William Snowden, and she left her place behind her desk and passed before him. He had a sight of her erect, swinging shoulders, her small, supple waist, the little curl on the back of her round neck. She seemed to him to go lirting out of the room like a gay melody passing into the distance.

When she came back with a message



She stood before the brother, a gleam of mockery in her eyes.

from Mr. Snowden, she stood before the brother, a gleam of mockery in her eyes. She was accustomed to a prompt and ungrudging tribute of admiration from men; she proposed to have it from this person who, her eyes told her, was very much a man, despite the peculiarity of his attire and the quaintness of his speech. Her imagination played with the notion of him garbed "like a Christian," she put it to herself—clipped, shaven, linen-collared, well-booted. Why, he would be a splendid-looking man! He was better looking than most even now! He was better

looking than Tom—taller, broader, ruddier, with keener, directer eyes. Then she sighed. She wished that she did not inevitably compare every male human being whom she met with Tom!

She insisted upon talking to Brother Eli. She asked with solicitude concerning Sister Amanda; she implied that she had been much interested in a visit that she had made to the Community the other day.

"Yes, I remember," said Brother Eli, and, though Laurene's face remained politely blank and inexpressive, her heart gave a little bound of pleasure. The queer man had noticed her then!

"You were not there, I think," she objected. "At least I didn't see you."

"I was just driving out as thee came in—thee and thy friends—in an automobile."

"Ah, I remember! It was you who held the horses so splendidly in, when we came puffing around the curve!"

A warm glow stole through all of Brother Eli's frame. His horsemanship was his secret pride.

Probably no human being ever commits a stupendous folly without at some moment of its progress believing it to be an act of the finest, noblest reason. If temptations did not come wearing angels' wings, they would not be temptations. If the good, the upright, the idealistic, never saw their personal desires clothed in the radiant guise of benevolent duties to the world, the millennium would not be quite so distant as it is.

All of which philosophizing serves to introduce the statement that, when Brother Eli was finally moved to undertake the conversion of Laurene Sanford, when he was moved to urge her to come and live for a period at the Community and hold daily converse with Sister Amanda, he was intoxicated by the thought that he was doing a fine piece of soul saving, that he had already transmuted earthly desire into heavenly aspiration.

As for Laurene, when she promised to "think it over," it is difficult to know what she intended or believed in regard to herself. She was not an ideal-

ist, not unselfish, not particularly upright, so that she was less liable to self-deception than her more high-minded fellows in this vale of tears. She loved sensations—that was why she had trifled with Tom; she had wanted to feel the sensation of fearing his wrath, of daring it and then of disarming it. She had liked the sensation of loving him, but, after the first, it had lacked excitement, and so she had been forced by the necessities of her untrained nature, to introduce new elements into it.

Well, she had introduced one too many, and so she had secured for herself a new and withering sensation—that of defeat, of total loss. But even the novelty of vindictive jealousy had worn off; anger, pain, despair, these, too, for all their poignancy, grew monotonous. Laurene wanted a new sensation, and she dallied with the thought of the strange religion which Sister Amanda and Brother Eli sought to expound to her, as likely to furnish her with one.

She admitted to herself that it would also be "fun"—Laurene's vocabulary was limited, and "fun" was the generic term she used to denote all pleasurable sensation, all excitement of conquest, all exercise of powers—to "wake up" the queer old party, Brother Eli.

So it came to pass that the Community, never loath to turn an honest penny, especially where it was able to tell itself that it saw a chance for the spread of its doctrines, received Laurene as a boarder for a time. She had wearied of the callow youth, and of the succession of week-end husbands at Mrs. Fervert's; she had grown, after the universal habit of boarders, weary of Mrs. Fervert's cooking; she was, in spite of her routine duties at Snowden Brothers', idle-minded; she had read somewhere of the transcendent beauty of complexion which vegetarianism bestowed, and she felt an inclination to try it, though she was forced to admit that her own lovely skin was more of an advertisement to the benefits of a meat diet than the complexions of the Siloam sisters were to those of a vegetarian. She was restless, she was un-

happy. So she went to the Community, and she held out vague hopes to Sister Amanda that she might be entirely converted to the doctrines of the sect.

All of the Community was a trifle excited by Laurene's presence and the hopes it aroused. If one like this, young, strong, unconquered, no fugitive from life, could be won to their way of thinking and living, might there not be a great spread of their faith? They flattered the girl with attentions, with the atmosphere of adulation, with the assurance of their prayers.

Little Sister Amanda, in those days, went about with her nearsighted eyes always suffused with a mist of hopeful tears; she wrote unnumbered poems, halting in rhythm, forced in rhyme, cloudy in meaning, on the theme of Laurene's possible conversion; she had visions which she conscientiously recorded. She hung upon the girl's society, plied her with attentions, visible and invisible. If Laurene had had the inestimable privileges of a college education in one of those institutions where rival Greek-letter societies flourish, she would have realized that she was being "rushed."

Along with the excitement of this flattery, there was the more congenial excitement of the chase. Her sure instinct told her that it was not merely as an earnest missionary that Brother Eli was interested in her. She did not, like Sister Amanda, who felt that she and the good brother had now a new, strong bond of intimacy, of common work, mistake the source of his interest in her.

A freedom of intercourse between her, a hoped-for convert, but not yet a member of the order, and Brother Eli, was permitted which would not have been allowed to one of the sisters already of the Community. She was still only a boarder; she might be driven, now and again, to town by Brother Eli alone without scandal. She might seek him boldly where he worked in field or office, as a mere visitor might, but not one of the sisters. She might seek instruction from him.

And she did, tormenting him mightily in so doing, and enjoying his torment with a perverse vanity—and with something more. He was no boy to be trifled with, and she knew it, knew it tremblingly but daringly, the sense of the danger she ran—the danger of unloosing floods beyond her control—floods which would sweep away the restraints of the manufactured saint, which would sweep her along in their force—the sense of that danger was delicious to her.

When the end came to the farce they played between them—the farce of missionary and possible convert—no one knew. When or where the man in him, denied all through his youth the right to love and be loved, yet forced to live more or less in the world which existed through love—when and where that man burst through the formalities and rules that had refused to admit the fact of his being, no one at Siloam ever knew. When or where his arms unfolded her to him, when or where he tasted the sweetness of her red lips, they never knew. By some marvel, the eavesdropper, the chance witness of clandestine endearments, had not flourished that summer at Siloam.

Whether it was some still evening as he drove her through the woods from Ramsey's Mills—some evening when the honey-colored lights of sunset and moonrise blended, when the only sounds were sleepy chitterings of birds in their nests, and the air was odorous and languid; or whether it was some bright, sunlit morning in the office, where he worked and where she often sought him, with the austere eyes of the men and women who had founded his order looking down upon the unhallowed caress, no one ever knew.

But one September evening, neither Brother Eli, who had gone to town to the bank, nor Laurene who had, as usual, gone to her work with Snowden Brothers, came back to the Siloam Community. The boy who was to have driven Laurene out from Ramsey's Mills returned with the information that Mr. Snowden said she had left at noon—he had understood that she was



Sister Amanda, Jung off the old hand that would have conveyed some message of sympathy, of understanding.

going back to the Community; she had not felt well and had asked a half day's holiday.

They were all alarmed, the sisters. Six—seven hours! Unless harm had befallen her, she could easily have walked the four miles in an hour and a half. She had often done it.

Some one—it was Eldress Anna, whose eighty summers had bent and shriveled her, but whose sunken eyes still saw deeply into life—suggested that before an alarm was sounded through the countryside, they wait the return of Brother Eli.

"Perhaps," said the old woman, "she met with him and drove with him to the bank."

Sister Amanda, listening, grew ashen-colored; she had been full of excitement and suggestion. Laurene was so much her own property that the whole Settlement had yielded altogether to her in the method of proselytizing the girl, and it deferred now to her counsel and her ideas. She had

been all for widespread alarms; now she was stricken with a chill at Eldress Anna's words; she could not explain it, the shivering fear that took possession of her.

The hours passed, and neither Eli nor Laurene returned. The Community, through the brother next to Eli in authority, telephoned to the town. Yes, the reply came, when they finally achieved a connection with the bank cashier's house, Brother Eli had been at the bank about two o'clock that afternoon. He had drawn out three hundred dollars.

"Drawn out!" was the cry from the other end of the wire. For Eli had taken a hundred dollars from Siloam Community House to be deposited.

The next morning the rural mail carrier, jogging through the hills in his two-wheeled cart behind his sturdy little horse, brought the explanation. It was postmarked from a Connecticut city. It was in Brother—Brother no more—Eli's clerky handwriting. He

had left the Order. He had left Siloam forever. He took with him the four hundred dollars which he had brought into the Community when he had been practically willed to it, a helpless child, nearly forty years before.

He felt it no dishonesty to do this, he said, "for there has never been a day when I have not earned my keep since first I came to Siloam; and for many and many years now I have made the riches of the Siloam Community to multiply. I am guilty of no dishonesty in what I do."

And at the bottom of his note, there was a line in Laurene's unformed hand: "Please, Sister Amanda, forgive me. L."

Sister Amanda, staring at the document, looked as though a fire were burning the very fabric of her life away; her thin cheeks were dry, and glazed, and crimson, her eyes like coals. Eldress Anna sought to lay a kindly hand upon hers—all the sisters felt that Laurene's defection must indeed be a very personal blow to her instructress, her spiritual guide and preceptress.

But Sister Amanda flung off the old hand that would have conveyed some message of sympathy, of understanding; and, with a dreadful, inarticulate cry of rage and defeat, she broke from the room. From the windows of her little monastic cell she looked out upon the peaceful world—the well-tilled acres, the neat, prosperous buildings, the infolding hills. And as she looked she raised her thin arms and clasped her shaking hands.

"Lies, lies, lies!" she cried out to the purple horizon. And again, as she thought of the delusion in which she had lived happy for so long, she cried: "Lies, lies, lies!"

CHAPTER III.

Among the "world's people" of the Siloam hills and valleys, the elopement of the long-bearded brother and the dashing young secretary of Snowden's Paper Mills created mirth that did not soon perish. It was the sort of joke which the plain, bucolic wits could ap-

preciate; it was one upon which plain, robust imaginations could embroider.

To the farmers, the laborers, and the village tradesmen who had never succeeded in getting the better of Brother Eli, it was almost in the nature of a long-deferred revenge; they were perfectly certain that this time he had bargained badly, that he would find Laurene anything but a durable purchase, in spite of the great price he had paid for her—the sacrifice of his belief, the loss of his position, his honor; nay, according to his own lights, his very soul.

In the Community, naturally, the humor of the situation was not perceived. Had not principle and training, real faith, and the daily exercise of conscience, forbidden despair, forbidden even panic or excitement, there would have been a pitiable state of disorganization among the brethren and sisters. Brother Eli had been one of the chief prides and glories of the Order. Although he had never seen the visions or dreamed the dreams which made the awesome renown of some of his associates, those practical gifts of his which had enabled the Community to cope so successfully with "the world," that splendid ability which had caused two blades of grass to grow where one had grown before all over the Siloam acres, which had warded off disease from the herds, blight from the crops—all that fine agricultural and commercial talent of his—had made him perhaps a more respected brother than the mystical endowments of some of the others. So much practical ability, so much practical morality as he had seemed to have!

No wonder that in the depths of their hearts the brethren and sisters were almost as frightened by his loss as they were scandalized by the manner of it. It was a calamity, nothing less—a calamity apart even from its spiritual aspect.

Although it was of that that the brethren and sisters spoke most, although they lamented the fall from grace of a brother rather than the loss of a manager, although they bewailed the broken promises, the disregarded

obligations, yet the thing which struck the most panic to their souls was the practical disadvantage of Brother Eli's defalcation.

They made no effort, however, to overtake and to punish the fugitive. Their creed commanded nonresistance to evil as strongly as it commanded celibacy and the communal possession of property. Because Brother Eli had disregarded two of the laws laid upon him, had taken communal funds to himself, and had looked upon a woman to lust after her, that was no reason, the Order decided, why it should disregard the third injunction of its religion.

So the brethren and sisters did not even denounce the fugitive, or read him out of the sect with any pomp of ceremony, and sonorous blast of excommunication. Quieting whatever tumult they felt, they devoted themselves to the effort to bridge the gap, to heal the wound, which his flight had made.

And any party of summer visitors, driving up to the doors of the Community houses three days after Eli and Laurene had eloped, would have found no difference in their welcome or in the placid atmosphere of the busy place. A close-bonneted sister, smiling, full of the technicalities of her faith, a little garrulous, perhaps, in expressing her views, would have led them from one prim room to another, from one busy shop to the next; she would point out the sisters at their canning or their sewing or their broom making, the brethren in the fields or the printing offices or the shoe shops; she would show them a sister snipping the first withered leaf from the bright beds of geraniums or petunias; she would show them boys weeding in the onion patch.

And the visitors would never guess, unless the country people had enlightened them, that any calamity had ever befallen the peaceful Order. It would not, however, have been Sister Amanda who acted as cicerone.

On the morning when the letter of defiant explanation from Brother Eli had reached the settlement, and Sister

Amanda had lifted accusing hands to heaven, she had not known how elemental was her anguish. She had not analyzed it into its component parts.

That her grief should be more bitter, more overwhelming, than that of the others did not seem to them or to her a matter of marvel. Was she not the poetess, and therefore allowed by all traditions, even the severe ones of the Siloam Order, to have more sensitive feelings than another? And was not Laurene her own hoped-for convert?

More than that, had not the girl aroused in Sister Amanda one of those strong affections which have something almost maternal at their roots? Thus the explanations of her collapse ran—she was a delicate spirit, she had loved the girl with a love too strong, too absorbing, perhaps too much "of the world," yet forgivably so. Only Eldress Anna shook her ancient head upon this reasoning.

As for Amanda, she accepted it at first. Her world had fallen about her ears; what wonder that she was upset, undone? But the bitter, consuming fire in her heart blazed too high for self-deception; in its light she was forced to see the truth. Not because she had a more sensitive soul than others had did her universe lie in ruin about her; not because she had loved Laurene with any maternal ardor, not even because she had labored so hopefully for her conversion, did she now find her own life insupportable.

It was not even because she suddenly awoke to the realization of all that Eli had meant to her these twenty years past, although this realization did overwhelm her. But the perception of the fact that all her life since she had grown to womanhood was founded upon a delusion that she had built upon the unsubstantial ground of falsehood—this was what finally maddened her. This was what had been in her mind, dimly, unconsciously, when she had uttered the cry with which she greeted the announcement of the flight.

Lies, lies, lies! All lies—the doctrine she had embraced so eagerly in that unloved, unattractive girlhood of hers, so

many years ago! A lie that a woman could live in the world happily, usefully, and never feel for any man the thrill of possessive love! A lie that there was a more satisfying feeling than this—that there was possible a selfless, unseeking, undemanding union, spiritual, intangible, between men and women! So, in her bitterness, she said.

What had the life of the Siloam Community offered her back there in the days when all the boys of her acquaintance passed her by, when their eyes never sought hers out, their hands never pressed hers, when all the plain, direct pleasures of rustic wooing were denied her?

It had offered her a refuge from the necessity of wooing, an asylum from the humiliation of going uncourted.

And once there, once removed from the husband-hunting competition of her little town, what had befallen her?

Why, what but this—that her heart had gradually twined itself around her conception of Brother Eli; that she had imagined herself united with him in a great work—the spread of their doctrine, the maintenance of their Order; that she had fed her woman's need of love with this unsubstantiality, and had never known on what she lived, until the moment when she learned that in him the man had been stronger than the saint, as in herself it was the woman—the universal, hungry-hearted woman—who had all unwittingly worn the saint's garments for so many years.



"Lies, lies, lies!" she cried out to the purple horizon.

Dim recollections of her Ramsey girlhood came back to her to torment her. She remembered the stone wall beside the churchyard, the rendezvous on summer nights of village youths and maids; she remembered glimpses she had caught there of dark arms encircling light-clad waists, of girls' heads resting upon the shoulders of their lovers. She remembered kisses she had seen snatched behind half-closed doors at husking bees and sewing parties. She remembered the scent of lilacs on spring evenings and of how it always filled her with a languor and with longing, though she had never known for what.

And remembering all these things, and thinking of Eli and Laurene, she beat her clenched hands against the iron frame of her bed in a fury of jealousy. With an imagination grown suddenly acute, she pictured them in their flight. They would be married by this time—alas, that there was nothing in the laws of the world to prevent a brother of the Order from contracting a legal marriage.

They would be married; Eli would be clothed after the manner of the "world's people," and for all the difference between his age and Laurene's they would be well matched in looks—both handsome, both vigorous, one in a magnificent, unspoiled maturity, the other in the unspent glory of youth.

She dug her nails into the palms of her hands at the thought. Oh, if she could but mar that insolent loveliness

of the girl! If she could, by wishing, by blasphemous prayer, by any unholy incantation, wither and blight it! It seemed to her that the loss of her own soul would be a small price to pay for one instant of such destructive power.

It was curious, as time passed, to mark the change wrought in Sister Amanda by this sudden, late gust of passion and jealousy, this delayed knowledge of herself and of the world in which she lived.

The first result of it was that she was no longer guide for the Community visitors; all that rather pleasant, prattling garrulity which had been so desirable a trait in a cicerone for the Order, deserted her. She could no longer direct the attention of visitors "from the world" to the tonic qualities of the blackberry cordial which the other sisters made in the stillroom, or to the durability of the cloth of which the voluminous "Siloam cloaks" were made, or to the careful workmanship of the brooms and knickknacks; far less could she chant the glories and beauties of the Siloam creed.

Once or twice, after the day when Eli and Laurene went away together, the brethren and sisters essayed to have Amanda perform her ancient tasks. They felt both that no one else had been found to do them so well, and that to do them again, to enter again into the common routine that she had known, would be helpful to Amanda's stricken soul.

But the effort was useless. Monosyllabically she had answered the questions which the guests had put to her; wearily she had dragged herself and them from one waxen-clean room to another; silently, without the old, spontaneous bursts of explanation, she had listened to their garbled recital, among themselves, of the tenets of the Siloam Order. What difference did their opinions make? What difference, indeed, did the facts themselves make?

And the visitors had departed without buying one pamphlet, one jar of jelly, one apron, or clothes brush. Clearly Amanda's day as cicerone was done.

Done, too, was her day of inspiration. The reams of paper which Eli had ordered from the Snowden Mills on that bright August day when his Fate sat waiting for him would never have had their fair surface marred, had it depended upon Amanda to supply the Siloam Community with literature. She bore no more testimony to strange spiritual experiences vouchsafed her in dreams and visions, as she had been accustomed to do; she made no more lame, ecstatic rhymes, set her own thoughts no longer to the melody of old hymn tunes. And the bright, birdlike eagerness of her withered face was gone from her.

Gradually, however, a new set of powers seemed to grow up in her. If she no longer saw beautiful visions in which the brethren and sisters walked in gardens of asphodel, the chosen ones of heaven, she developed a keen sight for more practical matters. If she no longer chanted the holy satisfactions of the life of the Order, she achieved, as time went on, an eminent ability in dealing with its affairs.

The hardening of her heart, the blinding of her eyes, to things that had once been soft and lovely to her, was not accomplished without a sort of grim recompense. She worked now at practical things with a tireless earnestness; she bargained with a shrewdness that the "world's people" who had dealings with the Order called a relentless greed.

And when Eldress Anna died and the sister next in authority after her, it fell to Amanda's lot to sit high in the councils of the Community and to manage the affairs of the Sisters' House.

And no one, from the day when old Anna had closed her dim eyes in death, ever doubted that Amanda was a satisfied woman or a sanctified one. But Amanda always remembered what the dying lips had said to her—had remembered, wondering the while how it happened that Anna, half blind, half deaf, withdrawn so long from all the concerns of life, should have been able to see and to read her.

"God melt thy heart, Sister Aman-

da," had been the eldress' last words to her. "God melt thy heart, though it be with a cruel grief. Does thee hear me? Does thee understand Anna's last prayer for thee? God shatter the stone that incases thy heart, though He use a blow for the shattering!"

Amanda had gone off from the deathbed of the old saint, with bitterness of soul. Idle prayer! Had not God spent His blows upon her? Had He not used the utmost of His sorrows against her heart? Had He not taken from her all her innocent vanities, her innocent delights and delusions? Had He not allowed her to fix her heart upon a human idol, and had He not then carried it away from her worshipping sight?

Had He not, above and beyond all, made her see that all her existence was founded upon an unreality, that when she had thought herself living a life of high, spiritual endeavor, she was but loving with all the human warmth of any poor woman "in the world"; and, like any poor woman "in the world," deceiving herself in regard to the love that was returned to her?

Ah, no! There were no more arrows left in God's quiver, she felt, for her! There was nothing left with which even He could touch her! If He would but let her see her foe—the woman who had wronged her—would but let her see that foe in misery, would but let her add to that foe's misery, then her heart might soften. If she might but have an hour of gloating over the girl—her beauty despoiled, her dare-devil charm vanished—then, in her gratitude, a sweet, life-giving blood of emotion, of feeling, might return upon her. Never otherwise.

Six years passed from the time of the elopement of Laurene and Brother Eli. After that first letter there had been no communication from them. Occasionally a rumor concerning them drifted to Siloam, sometimes a summer visitor with an accurate recollection for scandal would recall the newspaper account of their flight, and would add some other journalistic paragraph

of later date concerning them; for, of course, the press of "the world" had not allowed the picturesque tale to die out with the bare recital of the elopement; there had been for a month or two "follow-up" stories about the movements of the apostates from the Community.

Sometimes a brother or a sister sent to Siloam from one of the other houses of the Order mentioned some dim report that had drifted across another part of the world. But nothing really authentic ever came back to Siloam concerning the man whose whole conscious life had been spent there, or concerning the girl on whom such high hopes had been built.

And meantime at Siloam the Order waned. Not only Eldress Anna crossed the border beside which she had dwelt for so long, but others of the brethren and sisters died. New converts were scarcer than ever in the history of the sect; a homeless lad whom Brother Jonathan, head farmer, hired to help with the haying, professed himself a believer in the stern and mystic creed, and was duly received into the Community, only to leave it when a few months of good food and warm clothing, of clean shelter and peaceful, untroubled living, had put flesh on his bones and courage to face the world into his heart.

A widow of the countryside came, bringing her two-year-old baby girl with her. But the little thing died, and only the grieving mother remained.

The sole prosperity which the Siloam Community knew in those six years was the growers' and the traders'; they farmed successfully, and they bought and sold advantageously. And though worry was held by them to be a sin to be avoided and detested like any other weakness of the flesh or of the mortal mind, there were times when there was anxiety in the placid faces.

The increase in live stock, the ever-added fertility of the soil, the ever-growing balance in the bank—of what use were these things, if, in the course of a few years, the last of those who believed this material abundance to be



One could see the girl in the garden, herself a glowing flower, and one could see the quaint little Sister.

the blessing of Heaven upon their creed should be borne out of the house?

One September day there came to Amanda, standing in austere charge of the room where two sisters wove rag carpets, a boy, helper about the barns. There was a stranger outside, he reported, a man who had asked many intimate questions concerning the Order, and who now craved speech with her.

"I told him," the lad explained, "that thee was in charge of all, Brother Jonathan being gone to the Ramsey cattle fair with our oxen."

"Is he looking for work?" asked Amanda hopefully. Laborers were needed for the harvesting.

"He has not said. He asks to speak with thee."

"I will come to the barnyard," said Sister Amanda.

And so saying, she left the bright, prim room with the looms, and the close-capped sisters at their toil, and walked, assured, unfaltering, competent, upon the climax of her days.

Long, long ago she had ceased to expect the return of the fugitives. Long, long ago had she ceased to stare at

every advancing figure with the suffocating certainty that it would prove to be Eli's. Except when she was alone with her bitter hatred, she seldom thought of them now. The place that had been, for months, an hourly, torturing reminder of them, had long since ceased to suggest them to her fancy.

It was only when she was alone for the periods of prayer and meditation, enjoined by the rules of the Order, that she thought of them; and then she thought of them with the baffled sense that she would never be able to

wreak vengeance upon them.

Yet it was Eli who stood before her in the sunny corner of the barnyard; Eli, clad in the garments of "the world" and wearing them with a big, bumpkin awkwardness; Eli, with his close-cut hair gray about his lined and storm-beaten face; Eli dumb before her.

He twirled the rim of his soft hat miserably before her. He dropped his eyes, as blue as ever, but sunken now, and set in a fine network of wrinkles. He, who had looked every man and every woman squarely in the face, who had been powerful, respected, a lord of little things—he was abashed and ashamed before her. He stood, an embarrassed suppliant, expectant of rebuff.

And, in one of the blinding illuminations that come sometimes to mortals in the crises of their lives, she knew that he had often stood thus—a suitor at men's gates, awaiting the word of dismissal. Before a word had been spoken, she knew him for a defeated man; she realized that those qualities which had made him great in Siloam had not con-

quered the world outside the hills; she guessed—nay, she knew—that he had known the consuming shame of idle days when no man would employ him; that he had known poverty—hunger even.

And before a word had been spoken, a furious pity broke through the crest that had hardened around her heart—oh, that the world had dared to treat him like this! That it should have dared to defeat him! That the woman should have dared to let him suffer failure, should have dared to let him realize himself a failure!

For in that illuminating second Sister Amanda knew that a man's wife may save him this knowledge.

"Sister—thee knows me?" he faltered forth at last.

She bowed her bonneted head.

"I know thee, Eli," she replied.

"And—and—what has thee to say to me? Say it, and have done with it!" he cried defiantly.

"Is she—the woman—thy wife, in the world's talk—is she with thee?"

"Nay; nor has been these four years!"

"She—she has passed away?" whispered Amanda.

She felt a cold chill of terror. Perhaps those malignant wishes of hers—perhaps that hot, impious passion to do evil—had wrought some disaster, after all!

But Eli answered: "Nay."

"Not dead—and not with thee these four years?" Amanda's tone was bewildered.

"She left me. She—never loved me. Forgive it that I speak to thine ears the language of the world's people. She never loved me. There was another man. When we had been married two years, and our little child was a year old, the other man was set free of bonds he had been in; he had been plighted to marry another, but the other died. And he sought her out—Laurene—or she sought him. How shall I tell? I knew only this life here, what knew I of women?"

He looked with longing at the great, rectangular buildings.

"Go on with thy tale," commanded Sister Amanda.

The habit of authority remained with her, in spite of the wave of pity and indignation that threatened to sweep away that Amanda of the past few years.

"There is but little to it. She sought him out; she tempted him—yea, I will say it so! She tempted him! Do I not know her temptations? Was not the first man also tempted of a woman to his undoing? She tempted him. Ah, well, the rest thee would not have me say. For the sake of our little one, our little Amanda——"

"Amanda?" faltered Sister Amanda.

"Yea. She would name her so; she had some love for thee. And she knew that it was a knife in my heart to be reminded every hour of what I had done, of the honorable place I had left. So, loving thee a little and loving much to torment me, she named the small one for thee. And for the little Amanda's sake, I did as the world's people counseled. I—I divorced her. She wanted it—and the man. And since then—Sister Amanda, will thee take my child? I do not ask for myself a sanctuary again. But the little one——"

"Where has thee left her?" asked Amanda.

He pointed toward the woods that fringed the fields of corn, standing stacked in russet tents.

Amanda turned and walked across the stubble aisles, and he followed humbly in her wake.

And at the edge of the field, obediently sitting where her father had left her, they found the little child, with wide, wondering blue eyes beneath a cloud of ruddy golden hair. She looked questioningly at her father, but his anxious face gave her no reply. Then she looked at the little woman in the queer cap and the shapeless dress. And a smile of infantile delight curved her rosebud of a mouth. She put out a dimpled hand to Amanda.

And the woman, thwarted for so many years, baffled in all the avenues of her emotion, caught the soft, tiny fin-

gers in her hard ones, and felt the gush of living waters in her soul. That which she had missed in youth, the long-past youth of wonder and mystification at life, of longing for she knew not what; that which she had dreamed she possessed in her maturity, only to lose—all came to her now in the clasp of the child's hand upon hers. To love, to spend oneself selflessly for a loved one—that was the meaning of life for all women but the chosen saints of Heaven. They might attain salvation otherwise—but not she!

She raised joyful eyes to Eli's face.

Where the Siloam buildings used to stand, there is to-day a girl's school, part of which is used in summer as a boarding house. And the favorite legend of the schoolgirls and of the summer boarders is the neighborhood story of how one day the four remaining men and women of the Order passed sorrowfully out of their great, empty houses, and drove to the railroad, where they took train for another community of the Order, which had been depleted by death and change of its membership.

But, so the schoolgirls and the summer visitors tell newcomers, there are other relics of the fine, austere, self-destroying sect which was once great and prosperous in the neighborhood.

Over in the village of Ramsey, they say, is a sister who left the Community before its close in order that she might bring up a little girl to the life of "the world," and the girl is the daughter of a brother who eloped once upon a time with one of "the world's" daughters.

And when he, having tested the world and found it a hard and cruel place, brought his child back that she might grow up in the safety and sanctity of the Siloam Order, why, then, the sister had told him that it must not be; she had said that the child must grow up in the world, that only once in a

long time were women chosen, called, set apart by Heaven, for life apart from all human emotions.

And she herself went back to the world to bring the child up. If one drove to the village, one could see the girl in the garden, herself a glowing flower. And one could see the quaint little sister, who had never discarded her close caps, her scoop bonnets, her short, shapeless skirts—one could see her, busy among the vegetables or in the dairy of her cottage.

She was a wonderful manager, Sister Amanda—yes, the old name had clung to her, and she was "Sister" to all the world, as the world was defined in the hills—and she sold butter and eggs to the hotel, and she sent her broilers to customers in the city, and she put up wonderful conserves and pickles. She was always busy, always happy. And the child repaid her for her care and devotion with a gay, spontaneous affection.

"And did they never marry?" sometimes the sentimentalists ask. "The father of the little girl and the woman who mothered her?"

But the answer is a negative. Eli had had enough of marrying, and Sister Amanda would have thought it sacrilege.

He works a farm in the hills, and sometimes he comes and sits with his daughter and his old associate. And then the passers on the village street may chance to hear a strange hymn tune played on the melodeon by the young girl's fingers, and may hear two old quavering voices carrying it.

And they remember the brethren and sisters gone from the great buildings in the sheltered valley beyond the town; and they think, vaguely, dully, of the myriad ways in which men and women have sought salvation. And catching the sound of the young girl's voice, joining her elders, they think that perhaps, after all, the old way of home, and love, and children is the best.





It's Good to Be Alive This Year

By Charles Battell Loomis

ARENT you glad now that you didn't die of that attack of typhoid in 1898? Because you remember you always used to say that you thought it was only a question of time when men would fly. And don't you remember how all your relatives and friends used to laugh at you, and call you a crank and a visionary?

About that time the Dayton, Ohio, papers were carefully refraining from printing any accounts of the fool experiments "those Wright boys" were making.

"The sooner they break their necks, the better for their family. Their parents must be on edge every minute. And he a bishop!"

"If they were my sons I'd clap 'em into an insane asylum. I tell yer, man never has flown, and man never will fly."

So neighborhood people talked, just as neighborhood people talked in 1807, when Robert Fulton was getting ready to steam up the Hudson. Fulton was just such another fool as the Wrights, and the neighborhood people sneered, and jeered, and fleered, and then, when the *Clermont* really did steam through the water, cheered.

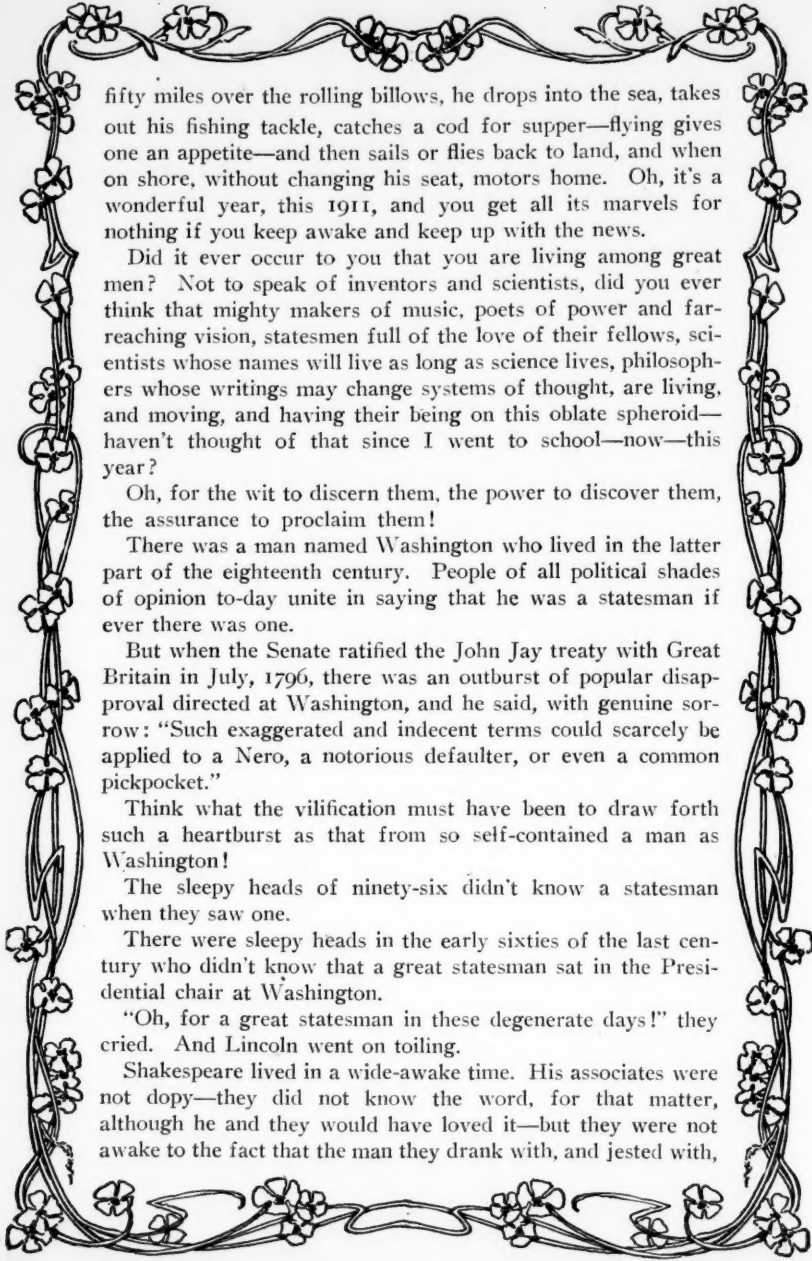
So the Dayton people cheered when the Wright brothers came home from their first triumph. But the Wrights only smiled. They had known all along they'd fly.

Well, if you'd died in 1898 you'd be as ignorant of all this as Benjamin Franklin is—presumably. And Franklin, the man of all men to be enthusiastic about it!

But you survived, and you're alive in this wonderful year of 1911, when a man like Curtiss starts out for a little motor boating, and, tiring of that, rises into the air, and, after rivaling the sea gulls for a while, rivals them yet again by perching on a ship.

Dinner with the jovial captain. The gulls never attain to that! Then: "Well, captain, I must be going. I want to fly to a spot where they say there's some good deep-sea fishing."

Into his machine, off into space, soon a tiny speck—to the ship's crew, never to himself—and, after a flight of forty or



fifty miles over the rolling billows, he drops into the sea, takes out his fishing tackle, catches a cod for supper—flying gives one an appetite—and then sails or flies back to land, and when on shore, without changing his seat, motors home. Oh, it's a wonderful year, this 1911, and you get all its marvels for nothing if you keep awake and keep up with the news.

Did it ever occur to you that you are living among great men? Not to speak of inventors and scientists, did you ever think that mighty makers of music, poets of power and far-reaching vision, statesmen full of the love of their fellows, scientists whose names will live as long as science lives, philosophers whose writings may change systems of thought, are living, and moving, and having their being on this oblate spheroid—haven't thought of that since I went to school—now—this year?

Oh, for the wit to discern them, the power to discover them, the assurance to proclaim them!

There was a man named Washington who lived in the latter part of the eighteenth century. People of all political shades of opinion to-day unite in saying that he was a statesman if ever there was one.

But when the Senate ratified the John Jay treaty with Great Britain in July, 1796, there was an outburst of popular disapproval directed at Washington, and he said, with genuine sorrow: "Such exaggerated and indecent terms could scarcely be applied to a Nero, a notorious defaulter, or even a common pickpocket."

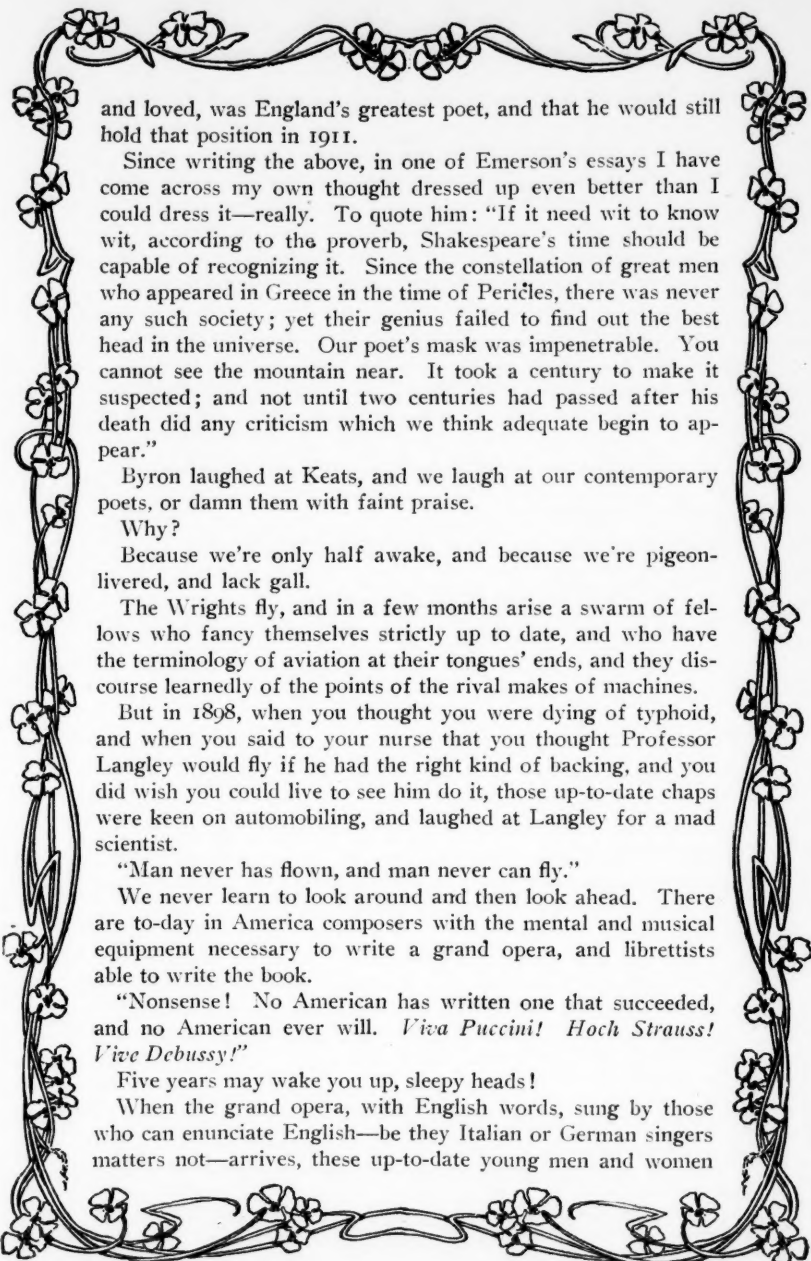
Think what the vilification must have been to draw forth such a heartburst as that from so self-contained a man as Washington!

The sleepy heads of ninety-six didn't know a statesman when they saw one.

There were sleepy heads in the early sixties of the last century who didn't know that a great statesman sat in the Presidential chair at Washington.

"Oh, for a great statesman in these degenerate days!" they cried. And Lincoln went on toiling.

Shakespeare lived in a wide-awake time. His associates were not dopy—they did not know the word, for that matter, although he and they would have loved it—but they were not awake to the fact that the man they drank with, and jested with,



and loved, was England's greatest poet, and that he would still hold that position in 1911.

Since writing the above, in one of Emerson's essays I have come across my own thought dressed up even better than I could dress it—really. To quote him: "If it need wit to know wit, according to the proverb, Shakespeare's time should be capable of recognizing it. Since the constellation of great men who appeared in Greece in the time of Pericles, there was never any such society; yet their genius failed to find out the best head in the universe. Our poet's mask was impenetrable. You cannot see the mountain near. It took a century to make it suspected; and not until two centuries had passed after his death did any criticism which we think adequate begin to appear."

Byron laughed at Keats, and we laugh at our contemporary poets, or damn them with faint praise.

Why?

Because we're only half awake, and because we're pigeon-livered, and lack gall.

The Wrights fly, and in a few months arise a swarm of fellows who fancy themselves strictly up to date, and who have the terminology of aviation at their tongues' ends, and they discourse learnedly of the points of the rival makes of machines.

But in 1898, when you thought you were dying of typhoid, and when you said to your nurse that you thought Professor Langley would fly if he had the right kind of backing, and you did wish you could live to see him do it, those up-to-date chaps were keen on automobiling, and laughed at Langley for a mad scientist.

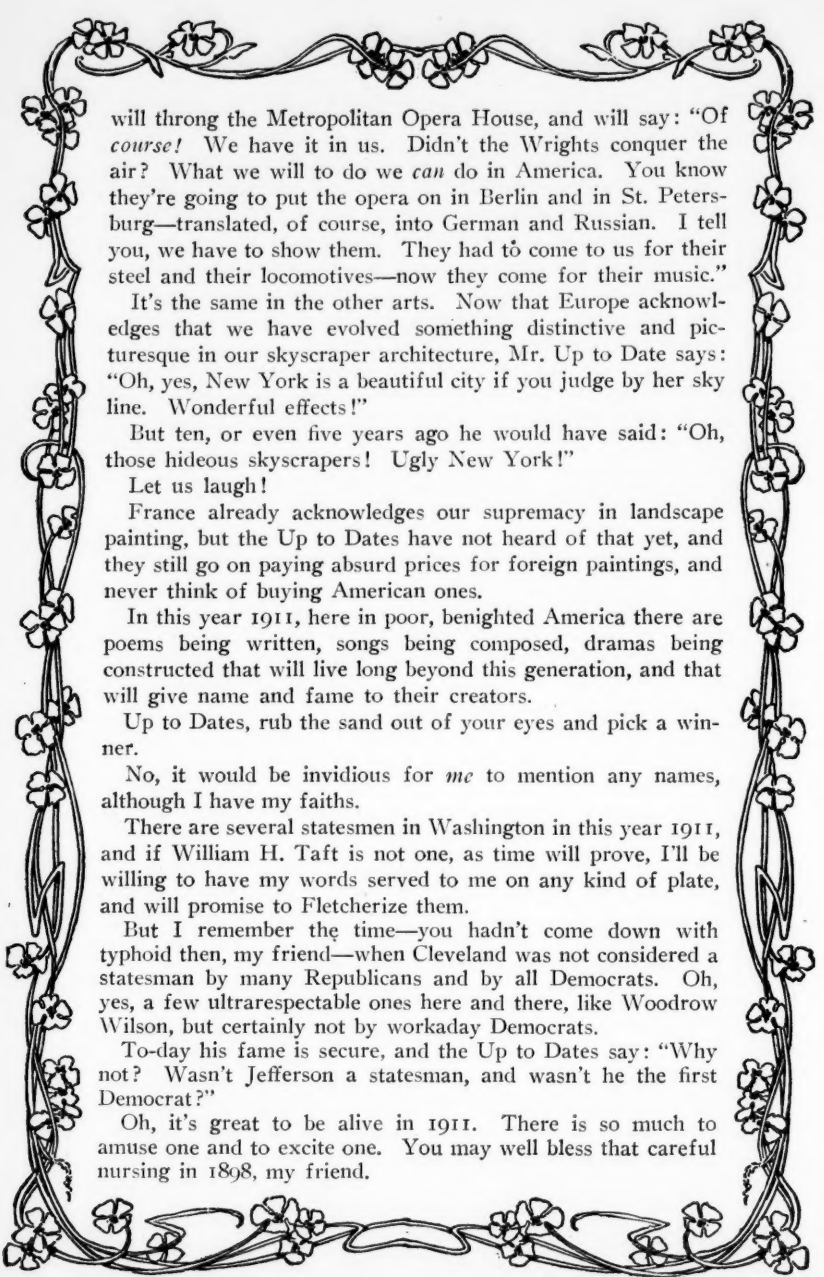
"Man never has flown, and man never can fly."

We never learn to look around and then look ahead. There are to-day in America composers with the mental and musical equipment necessary to write a grand opera, and librettists able to write the book.

"Nonsense! No American has written one that succeeded, and no American ever will. *Viva Puccini! Hoch Strauss! Vive Debussy!*"

Five years may wake you up, sleepy heads!

When the grand opera, with English words, sung by those who can enunciate English—be they Italian or German singers matters not—arrives, these up-to-date young men and women



will throng the Metropolitan Opera House, and will say: "Of course! We have it in us. Didn't the Wrights conquer the air? What we will to do we *can* do in America. You know they're going to put the opera on in Berlin and in St. Petersburg—translated, of course, into German and Russian. I tell you, we have to show them. They had to come to us for their steel and their locomotives—now they come for their music."

It's the same in the other arts. Now that Europe acknowledges that we have evolved something distinctive and picturesque in our skyscraper architecture, Mr. Up to Date says: "Oh, yes, New York is a beautiful city if you judge by her sky line. Wonderful effects!"

But ten, or even five years ago he would have said: "Oh, those hideous skyscrapers! Ugly New York!"

Let us laugh!

France already acknowledges our supremacy in landscape painting, but the Up to Dates have not heard of that yet, and they still go on paying absurd prices for foreign paintings, and never think of buying American ones.

In this year 1911, here in poor, benighted America there are poems being written, songs being composed, dramas being constructed that will live long beyond this generation, and that will give name and fame to their creators.

Up to Dates, rub the sand out of your eyes and pick a winner.

No, it would be invidious for *me* to mention any names, although I have my faiths.

There are several statesmen in Washington in this year 1911, and if William H. Taft is not one, as time will prove, I'll be willing to have my words served to me on any kind of plate, and will promise to Fletcherize them.

But I remember the time—you hadn't come down with typhoid then, my friend—when Cleveland was not considered a statesman by many Republicans and by all Democrats. Oh, yes, a few ultrasrespectable ones here and there, like Woodrow Wilson, but certainly not by workaday Democrats.

To-day his fame is secure, and the Up to Dates say: "Why not? Wasn't Jefferson a statesman, and wasn't he the first Democrat?"

Oh, it's great to be alive in 1911. There is so much to amuse one and to excite one. You may well bless that careful nursing in 1898, my friend.



THE UMBRELLA

-By-

EDWARD
BOLTWOOD

ILLUSTRATED BY G. C. PUGSLEY

AND, Sylvester!" called Mrs. Binnum hysterically to her husband. "I wish you luck, dear! I wish you luck!"

Her voice had a sharp note of mental agony. Mr. Sylvester Binnum, hurrying with his hand bag down the path from their front door, smiled grimly over his shoulder. He did not believe in luck, nor, he knew, did Clara; but the present crisis might justify a lapse into superstition. Mr. Binnum furtively took pains to touch the gatepost as he emerged on the village street.

"When I pass through this gate again I'll be fixed for life, or I'll be ruined!" he said to himself.

He hastened on toward the railroad station, gazing down at his long, slender legs, which were arrayed in their Sunday garments. The coming ordeal in New York demanded that Binnum in every detail should appear at his best advantage. Although he could hardly afford them, he had bought a cheap pair of patent-leather shoes, the first he had worn since his honeymoon, thirty years ago. Binnum surveyed them with hopeful gravity; but suddenly his horrified eyes encountered a brownish-green object, which stuck forward horizontally from his armpit.

"There!" moaned Sylvester. "Good luck, eh? I've got our old umbrella!"

In the excitement of leaving home, he must have grabbed the ancient monstrosity out of the rack by mistake for the other umbrella, the one with the silver handle, which his Sabbath-school class had given him. Mr. Binnum had seldom walked Broadway; but he realized that such a faded relic as the old umbrella, however useful it might be in Willowton, would arouse in New York a disfavor dangerous to his all-important enterprise.

There was no time now for Mr. Binnum to correct his mistake. Looking about for a safe place of temporary deposit for the umbrella, he happened to glance at the wooden building in the distance, which housed the Willowton Public Library. The sight of the building had an odd effect on Mr. Binnum. He drew a long breath, tucked the old umbrella obliviously under his arm again, and resumed his march to the railroad almost at the double-quick.

Mr. Sylvester Binnum had been the efficient librarian of the Willowton Library for so many years that he was now thoroughly unfitted for any other work. The small salary was all he had to live on. But the trustees of the library, at their last meeting, had nearly passed a vote asking for Mr. Binnum's resignation. They had nothing against Sylvester. Major Kahl, the vice presi-

dent, wanted the job for his wife's brother.

The panic-stricken librarian had hit upon a brilliant scheme of salvation. In New York lived Mr. Holman Axelrod, an elderly Wall Street operator, who had given five thousand dollars to the library in memory of his father, a native of Willowton. Holman Axelrod himself had never been in the village; Binnun had never met him; but to poor Sylvester, in his dire extremity, Mr. Axelrod loomed like a tower of refuge. He had determined to see Axelrod, and to impress himself so favorably on that financier as to secure his position and obtain for the village library a further endowment of which he might be the custodian.

"That would flatten out Major Kahl and his whole crowd!" Mr. Binnun had argued triumphantly to his wife.

"But we must think of everything, dear," had been Clara's reply. "What if you make an unfavorable impression on Mr. Axelrod?"

Binnun this afternoon recalled her tragic suggestion as he was passing the Willowton post office. His letters to Axelrod certainly had received only a formal acknowledgment. What, indeed, if his personal appearance on Wall Street failed also to elicit the desired response, or aroused positive hostility? Mr. Binnun could think only of the almshouse.

The librarian darted into a news stand near the station, and left the old umbrella on the counter. There was no one in the store; but his name was stitched on the umbrella, and he was confident that it would be returned to Clara, who valued it highly.

The train was waiting, and he seated himself by an open window. The moment of actual departure affected him with something like awe; his mission assumed the desperate character of a forlorn hope to a beleaguered and starving garrison. When the cars rumbled into motion, he closed his eyes prayerfully.

"Say, mister!" bawled a shrill voice outside the window. "You forgot your umbereller, didn't you? I seen you go

into our joint, and I chases after you. Here you be—just in time!" And before Sylvester could prevent it, the newsboy had propelled the umbrella into his lap.

Mr. Binnun registered at the Elmont House, an inexpensive hotel near Sixth Avenue. He had been a guest there in the early nineties, during his last visit to New York. Since that period, the clientele of the Elmont had been radically changed; the house was now patronized in chief by theatrical performers. But, of course, Mr. Binnun did not know that, nor did he have an opportunity of ascertaining it. At seven o'clock, after he had consumed his milk toast, tea, and apple sauce, he retired to his room, and stayed there.

Half awake in the morning, Sylvester convulsively raised himself from the pillow, and strained his ears. It was not the terrific clamor of the city which caused him to rush in a panic to the window. It was the sound of rain.

He glared at the old umbrella, hanging from the electrolier. Then he pulled his waistcoat from beneath the attenuated mattress, and counted the money in his pocketbook. The calculation was quite useless. Mr. Binnun knew beforehand that the purchase of a new umbrella was out of the question. The cost of the excursion, reduced to the lowest terms, already had occasioned tearful comment from his wife. Besides, was it not, upon the whole, rather foolish to attach importance to a mere umbrella? Mr. Binnun resolutely put on his Sunday clothes.

But after he had gone below his apprehension returned. The lobby of the hotel was thronged with brisk young men and chattering young ladies, clad, according to Mr. Binnun's untutored eyes, in the very height of elegance. The umbrellas which he saw, and he sadly noted them all, were slim and irreproachable. A sign over the check room—"Umbrellas to Rent"—elated Sylvester, until he found that the cynical attendant required a cash deposit. The sum frightened Mr. Binnun. He mournfully hoisted the old umbrella and started downtown, cringing under the

battered canopy, as if beneath the shadow of certain failure.

Binnum had pictured himself dashing into Axelrod's presence with invincible spirit, with the eager lust for success which breaks through all barriers. But Mr. Axelrod's door boy had seldom ushered to the private office a person less zealous in appearance than was Mr. Binnum this morning.

Mr. Axelrod, a fat man with a bilowy chin, glanced up from his desk and down again.

"Well, I got your letters," said he. "What is it?"

"The—the library. The position of—of librarian," faltered Sylvester.

"How about it?" snapped Axelrod, and looked up more sharply.

What he saw was a plaintive and woebegone individual, who clutched with both hands a bulging, faded umbrella, as if it were all he had to think of in the world.

"Oh, I'm busy!" Mr. Axelrod grunted. "Call an hour later, will you? Now, then, Backus!"

Sylvester meekly gave way to the private secretary, and shuffled to the door. He took the rebuff with the morose air of one who had never expected anything else. As he went out, he overheard Backus speaking to his employer.

"I say, sir," chuckled the secretary, "you spotted that poorhouse gamp, didn't you?"

"Funny sort of a thing for a librarian!" answered Holman Axelrod. "Please make sure he doesn't bother me again."

Nevertheless, Mr. Binnum called an hour later, and an hour and a half later, and two hours later. During the intervals he paced the stately corridors, where the old umbrella was as conspicuous as a cow in a drawing-room. Sylvester's nerve had vanished; the umbrella had blighted his soul, like some deadly incubus.

At about eleven o'clock, the librarian made a final disconsolate attempt to see Mr. Axelrod. It was in vain, as usual; but Binnum found courage to scribble the name and address of the Elmont on his card.

"In case Mr. Axelrod cares to send for me, I'm going back now to my hotel," mumbled Sylvester to the office boy.

"All right," said the boy, grinning.



"The—the library. The position of—of librarian," faltered Sylvester.

"And I judge you don't intend to get wet, either!"

Mr. Binnum boarded a Broadway surface car. He had never in his life been so miserable; and, knowing well where to ascribe the blame, he clawed the old umbrella malevolently.

The trolley car had reached Canal Street before Sylvester in his wretchedness was further troubled by the sensation that somebody was looking hard at him. He raised his head, and met the



"So take your choice right now, him or me!" hissed Mr. Azelrod.

intent eyes of a young man sitting opposite.

The young man had long features, and the lower part of his face was so closely shaved that it was almost blue. He wore a gray hat with a purple band; his tweed suit was patterned with a deafening check; and between his knees, sheltered by his vividly green raincoat, was balanced an immaculate silk umbrella with a gold and ebony handle.

Suddenly this young man jumped up, crossed the aisle, and seated himself beside Mr. Binnum.

"Nice rain for the crops, what, sir?" he remarked affably.

Binnum hazarded a melancholy assent. His own umbrella, grotesque and fateful, leaned against the edge of the seat, next to the dapper stranger's leg.

"I was saying, the crops," repeated the friendly young man, clearing his throat. "Look here, sir," he pursued. "I've got a little proposition to make to you, sir—a business proposition. It may sound jolly queer, but I'm in earnest, I assure you, and——"

"Stop!" fluttered Mr. Binnum, who had read of bunko men. "Stop! Another word, and I'll call the constable!"

The stranger winked with marked rapidity.

"But, my dear sir——"

"That's enough!" Sylvester broke in. "If you open your mouth to me again, you'll get arrested!"

The fellow's lips twitched curiously, and his lean cheeks reddened. Mr. Binnum turned away, fixing a riveted stare upon the front end of the car. Even in his distress, he was able to feel rather proud that he had repelled this pirate.

Amid a wild congestion of traffic, the car came slowly to a halt; and Mr. Binnum with interest contemplated the maze of raging truck drivers, and bewildered pedestrians, and majestic policemen. Until he discerned a gray hat with a purple band bobbing among the crowd, he did not know that his unpleasant neighbor had deserted the car. Sylvester shifted sideways into the vacancy

on the bench; then he started up with indignation. The old umbrella had deserted the car also.

Binnum's indignation was short-lived. He sat down again, smiling uncertainly. He had been robbed; the well-dressed stranger had not taken the old umbrella through an error, for the gold and ebony article had not been abandoned in its place. Nevertheless, Mr. Binnum felt comfortably that he had been relieved in more than one sense. His conscience would not have allowed him to throw away the old umbrella; but to lose the hated object innocently was a vague satisfaction.

In somewhat lightened spirits, he dismounted from the car and proceeded to the Elmont. The rain had ceased. The noontime sun was breaking through the clouds. Mr. Binnum's best clothes and patent-leather shoes, freed from the curse of the old umbrella, made him look like a prosperous man of affairs. Through the hotel lobby he walked erect and unshamed. The waiters in the Elmont's restaurant treated him with elaborate respect.

Having eaten lunch, Mr. Binnum went to his room. When he left Wall Street, he had hopelessly planned to take the first available train homeward; but to such a pitch had his courage been miraculously restored that he was now inspired to renew his assault upon Axelrod at the financier's residence, after business hours. Happy in this decision, Sylvester lay down on his bed, and sank into a peaceful sleep. The night had been restless, the forenoon exhausting, and Mr. Binnum's slumber was industrious and prolonged.

He was awakened by the ringing of the room telephone.

"Gentleman to see you," was the announcement. "May he come up? Name of Holman Axelrod."

"What?" gasped Binnum. "Yes! Oh, my gracious, yes!"

Sylvester leaned weakly against the wall. The thing was incredible! Had the disappearance of the old umbrella actually changed his luck? It seemed so. The librarian, in a daze, opened the door at the summons of a brisk knock.

"Good evening," said his visitor.

Binnum could not speak. He could only stare; for underneath Mr. Axelrod's arm was the old umbrella.

"Sit down, Mr. Binnum," said Axelrod cordially. "I guess you're shaken up yet by what you did this afternoon. By gad, sir, you're a hero!"

He laid the old umbrella on the bed, took a bank check from his pocket, and tossed it beside the shabby gingham.

"That's to your order," he continued. "I've just doubled my donation to your library. When you saved that little lady's life to-day, you did more than you reckoned on!"

"Saved—lady?" breathed Sylvester faintly.

Mr. Axelrod laughed.

"Can't blame you for wondering where I come in," said he. "The fact is, Binnum, between us, I've asked that little girl to marry me. She's kind of half stuck on a vaudeville man; but I judge that your Uncle Holman and his dough will win out. So when I read that item in the *Evening Planet*—haven't you seen it?"

Binnum, speechless and almost paralyzed by bewilderment, managed to shake his head, and to catch in his lap the newspaper which Axelrod flung to him.

"So when I read that item," resumed the fat stock broker, "I chased over to the *Planet* office, and got the umbrella. And I says to myself: 'Holman, old scout,' says I, 'it's up to you to be Sylvester Binnum's friend for life,' says I!" Mr. Axelrod examined his watch and buttoned his coat hastily. "Well, I must fly," he concluded. "I've got a date with Vera at six, and I haven't seen her since you pulled her from under the truck."

"Wuh-wuh-wait!" inaudibly blurted Mr. Binnum.

But Axelrod had vanished. The stunned librarian mechanically raised the newspaper; and out of the labyrinth of type a paragraph jumped at him.

Miss Vera Vyse, the music-hall singer, had a narrow escape from being run down by a motor truck on Broadway this noon. She was gallantly rescued by a well-dressed man,



The generous old umbrella seemed to be giving them its homely benediction.

and a *Planet* reporter rescued the rescuer's umbrella, which now awaits the owner at the *Planet* office. The name on the umbrella is Sylvester Binnum. Press agent?

Mr. Binnum snatched his hat and the bank check. As he scurried along the winding hall in pursuit of Axelrod, the check seemed to burn his conscientious fingers.

After several false starts down blind passages, and one down the servants' stairway, Binnum at length reached the office door, in a narrow lobby which led to the side entrance of the hotel. But here Mr. Binnum stopped in alarm and dodged discreetly behind a pillar; for Holman Axelrod, flushed and wrathful, was engaged in a heated conversation with a lady and a gentleman. The lady was a blond and daintily beautiful little

person in mauve; the gentleman wore a green raincoat and a gray hat with a purple band.

"So take your choice right now, him or me!" hissed Mr. Axelrod.

The lady tossed her head.

"And it doesn't mean only dinner to-night, Miss Vera. It means—you know!" added the financier darkly.

"Mr. Axelrod," said Miss Vera, tucking her hand under the green sleeve of the closely adjacent raincoat, "I've just found out that I want to belong to my dear, brave Billy here. How can I help it after what he did for me?"

"Did for you?" echoed Axelrod. "What do you mean? Think what I can do for you!"

At this the purple-banded hat jerked forward dangerously.

"Take your medicine like a decent sport, Axelrod," Billy advised. "I'll be a good husband to her, and you know it. Come, Vee!" And the happy pair passed on.

The discarded suitor escaped to the street. Sylvester was close behind; and Axelrod had barely planted himself in a snorting taxicab when Binnum grabbed his arm from the curbstone.

"Here's your—your check," panted Mr. Binnum. "You gave it to me because of a mistake. I didn't save that lady's life to-day. It was the other man—he'd stolen my umbrella, and—it was Billy!"

"Well, by gad!" Axelrod retorted. "How the dickens do you know? Did

you overhear that fool talk in the lobby?"

Sylvester nodded; and Mr. Axelrod, who appeared to be enduring his disappointment in love with some philosophy, rubbed his double chin, and smiled.

"Mr. Binnum, you're too honest for this town," said he. "You put that check in your pocket and hustle back to Willowton. The Willowton library deserves encouragement, and so does the librarian, and I'll write that to Kahl in the morning. Yes, that's my judgment, and you can't change it. When a bind is on me I settle! Now, driver, beat it to the club!"

Half an hour later, Mr. Sylvester Binnum sat at a table in the restaurant of the Elmont Hotel. His traveling bag occupied a chair beside him; and hooked over the chair was an ancient umbrella, which Mr. Binnum caressed affectionately from time to time. He had accepted the situation. His train for Willowton would leave in a few minutes.

Sylvester was paying the waiter, when he recognized two voices at the next table, screened from his by an artificial palm.

"What I want to know is this, Billy," said Miss Vera. "How did you happen to quit that trolley car just when I needed you?"

"Fate!" Billy answered, with solemnity. "Fate dressed up like an umbrella! The moment I noticed that wonderful umbrella, Vee, I knew that I had to have it. I knew that it would be worth a hundred laughs in my vaudeville sketch, and that no property man in the world could ever fake such a wonderful thing. Why, it was a dream! I tried to buy it, but the farmer took me for a bunko steerer. So then I watched out, and swiped it, and flew to the street, just in time for a chance to save you. Fate!"

"You won me, Billy darling, but you lost the umbrella."

"It was our mascot, for a fact," Billy sighed regretfully. "If it hadn't been for that precious gamp, you might have been saying 'Yes' to Axelrod to-night."

Sylvester's eyes gleamed strangely, for romance did not often color the life of the Willowton librarian. He picked up his bag with one hand, and with the other poked the umbrella through the palm leaves until it touched Billy's square shoulder. Then he dropped it, and fled.

At the door he turned for an instant. Miss Vyse had partly unfolded the faded gingham; and she and Billy were gazing up at it with blissful amazement, while the generous old umbrella seemed to be giving them its homely benediction.



Keepsake

ACROSS the fragrant summer fields the mists of morning rise,
 Slow-rolling, up to greet the sun above the eastern hill;
 The plowboy whistles down the lane, and looks with happy eyes
 Upon a world of changing grace that laughs at sorrow still.

The dew is glad in bloomy cells, and brave on blade and spray,
 And all is laughter, light, and love, and quick with life's pure joy.
 Ah, who shall say that any care can ever steal away
 The simple lesson simply taught—the summer to the boy!

CHAS. C. JONES.

MANNERS AT SIXTY-FIVE



Hildegarde Lavender

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRIET ADAIR NEWCOMB

WHEN I was sixteen, and my teachers, parents, older sisters, and other guardians spent a great deal of effort upon the forming of my character and my manners, and supplemented their instructions, whenever they paused for breath, by placing the printed word before me in the shape of little books of "don'ts" and "dos," of "daily guides," and "helps by the way," it never occurred to me to doubt that the character-and-manner-forming processes would be completed, say, by the time I was twenty-five. At that age I might occasionally feel righteous indignation at public abuses; but, of course, I should have long since overcome the tendency to personal petulance, to sulking, to hysterical rages at being thwarted in the effort to have my own way. At that age I might possibly like some persons better than others; but I should, of course, have long since outgrown the narrow snobbishness which made me look down upon all the girls not of my own set at school. At twenty-five, by the diligent and prayerful practice of

those customs of behavior and thought which all my guardians, printed and otherwise, enjoined upon me, I should be a model of sweet, helpful graciousness.

At twenty-five, I thought that I must attain this beatific state when I was forty. I put forty as the date for the passing of most of the unruly passions. Until that age one might conceivably be subject to freakish emotions, to qualms of jealousy, to attractions not altogether approved by the stern, regulating mind. Up to that time, one might also be, on occasion, curt in speech, overbearing in manner, insistent upon one's own way, scornful of other people's ways and views. But at forty, surely one would be done with troublesome emotions, troublesome tempers, temperamental uneasiness of all sorts. Surely at that age one could put away the little collection of bedside books—the sayings of Marcus Aurelius, of Thomas a Kempis, of Robert Louis Stevenson, of Ella Wheeler Wilcox, or of whomever one had chosen for a

guide in the difficult path of personal excellence.

At forty, I blush to say that, though the bedside books were put away, it was not because perfection had been attained. It was for the base reason that at forty I was far more occupied in making over other persons than in making over myself. At forty, I was engaged in reforming the middle-aged, social laziness of my husband, who had developed a tendency to coddle himself in the evenings as "a tired business man"; in correcting the bad, modern manners of my sons and daughters; in controlling the vagaries of my servants; in eliminating undesirable persons from my own list and from my children's; in adding to our stock of congenial and generally desirable acquaintances. In my own household I was busily engaged in having my own way without much opposition, and in putting opposition down with a firm hand when I encountered it. I said my prayers with my mind on many other things than my own shortcomings; and if I begged to be delivered from my faults, it was a very perfunctory sort of a plea I made, and was due solely to the provisions of the ritual, and not to my own eagerness after personal reform.

And from that time until the present I confess that I have gone on my way, giving little thought to my character and my manners. I have taken it for granted that, if my character was not formed by forty, it never would be; that if my manners were not good then, they never would be; that nothing could be more immature, more silly, more futile than for me to go on working over myself in any formative way.

I suppose that very religious women, with whom the thought of the continuance of life is always present, never reach this state; to them the idea that

they are going on forever, and that at seventy they stand but little farther along in their infinite progression toward the completion of their characters than they did at ten, acts as an ever-present spur toward high endeavor.

But I fear that the majority of old women in this generation are much like myself; that the world we have lived and ruled in is the one most constantly in our thoughts; and that, when we



In my own household I was busily engaged in putting opposition down with a firm hand when I encountered it.

have reached my age of sixty-five, it seems to us of very little use to resume the work of struggling toward perfection of temper, of tolerance, of courtesy. It would be just as sensible for us, so we think, to begin the gymnastic exercises which our granddaughters practice with the hope of attaining supple limbs, rosy skins, and bright eyes.

Well, I have revised my point of view. I have come to the conclusion that, so long as a woman lives in the world and exacts any consideration from

it, it is beneficial—it is necessary—for her to take humble thought of her bearing in it. I think that it is more necessary for her to do so at sixty-five than it is at sixteen!

I confess that it has been an intimate study of my son's mother-in-law which has led to the revision of my views in regard to the legitimate age limit of character development. It has been an intimate study of that same estimable lady which has led me to question myself rather seriously in regard to my own manners.

She is a good woman, that mother-in-law of my son's. I think she would willingly be cut into little pieces to save her daughter pain; of course, though, that would not be the proper procedure in order to save her daughter pain. I think that, although she obviously considers that Emma might have "married better"—detestable phrase!—she would go hungry for my son's sake; of course, however, he doesn't want her to go hungry; and I suppose there is nothing that could hurt him more than seeing her go hungry, unless it were seeing his wife, Emma, or me, go hungry.

And yet that good woman, that woman capable of fine, high sacrifices, makes Emma's life and George's—well, I won't say that she makes it a torment. I will merely say that she robs it of a great deal of the comfort and charm it might have; and all because she does not consider the cultivation—the careful, studied cultivation—of good manners a proper occupation for a woman of sixty-five!

Since seeing her, living in the same house with her for a while, I have come to the conclusion that good manners are more essential to sixty-five than to sixteen. Sixteen, noisy, obstreperous, "saucy," may, when she has become unendurable to the rest of the household, be sent to bed; but it is not so with sixty-five. The only escape from sixty-five, if she embarks upon a course of faultfinding, is for the rest of the household to make polite excuses for leaving the room themselves—which is sometimes highly inconvenient, and which always results in making sixty-five feel forlorn and neglected.

In manners it is as it is in clothes. Hear my daughter-in-law, Emma, on the subject:

"Mother says that fashions are for the young; and she simply won't take any interest in her clothes. Fashions are for the young, I suppose, if by fashions you mean hobble skirts and cart-wheel hats! But if you mean having things pretty—becoming, fresh, adapted more or less to the prevailing styles—then they concern the old more



"Mother says that fashions are for the young."

than they do the young. A complexion of milk and roses can wear any color; drab-and-fifty can't. Goldilocks—full and fluffy—may poise what monstrosity she pleases on her tresses, and it looks rather fetching; but scant, gray hair has to be humored. And so on, and so on. That's what I am always preaching to mother; but she takes no stock in what I say. She says her dressing days are over; and she wears an old

golf cape of the vintage of ninety-three when she goes out to market, and keeps a collection of antique blouses that are simply grotesque. She's really a very good-looking woman when she takes the trouble to wave her soft-gray hair, and to wear her pretty heliotrope or gray frocks. But it requires almost an order from the court to induce her to put them on; she's always 'saving' them for some great occasion."

I agreed heartily with my daughter-in-law, and resolved in the depths of my guilty soul that I would revise my own wardrobe when I returned home. My own daughter, Adeline, has frequently talked to me in something the same vein as Emma.

But it was the manners of Emma's mother of which I began to speak. I have almost concluded, as I said, that the cultivation of good manners is more important when one is old than when one is young. Youth has its spiritual



Harriet Allen November

"I'll be glad when that watermelon crape is worn out, Emma. I never thought it a becoming color."

qualities that are counterparts to its golden hair, its pink-and-white skin; and these spiritual qualities somewhat excuse the absence of the gentleness, the tolerance, the kindly humor which age must have; and can have only by taking thought, by practicing—I could almost say by praying.

There is that good mother-in-law of George's, for example. My son, I will admit, is frequently late to the breakfast table—his excellent mother-in-law never is. Does she ever fail to comment upon the hour? Not once! Grimly and caustically she greets him with: "Well, you did decide to get up, after all, did you?" Now, when that good lady was sixteen years old, had she indulged herself in such constant comment upon the habits of a brother, let us say, with the late-to-breakfast vice, she would very soon have been sent from the table as a worse nuisance than he; and she would have been exhorted against nagging.

But George's mother-in-law—and I myself, and all the rest of us who are sixty-five years old—may not be sent from the table, no matter how our bitter speech may be spoiling the meal, or our ungracious, ungenerous unwillingness to enter into the enthusiasms of youth may be inducing the dullness that, in turn, induces dyspepsia. No one may refer us to rules of conduct, scriptural or secular; we have all, at least, trained up our children so well that they would bite their tongues off before offending us by word—until we drive them to the point of an ugly, irrepressible outbreak. And then there is misery, truly—headache, heartache, the conviction on one side of an outlived usefulness, and on the other of an ungrateful heart, sores which heal slowly.

My son George's mother-in-law takes the family privilege of telling him quite freely what she thinks of his clothes, of his purchases, of his friends—when she has anything disagreeable to say on any of these topics. "I certainly hope you'll never get another suit from that man—what's his name? The one that made that suit, I mean!" It is not a sentence to send a young man forth to his day's work in the buoyant frame of mind in which a day's work should be tackled.

"I'll be glad when that watermelon crape is worn out, Emma. I never thought it a becoming color." It is not a particularly offensive statement; it is one that may be quite legitimately made when Emma is debating the color of her new evening frock. But, uttered casually, merely by way of making conversation, when Emma is just leaving for a dinner, it is not conducive to a calm and cheerful temper on Emma's part. Why should her mother say such a thing at such a time? She would not say it to her next-door neighbor—good manners would forbid her to make that personage uncomfortable.

Why should I always refer to my daughter Adeline's husband's excessive use of tobacco? I do think the boy smokes too much, and I think that I have the right, if not the duty, to tell him so now and then. But have I the

right to remark, upon entering Adeline's sitting room: "I see that Dick has been home. My, how the room smells of stale tobacco! Why do you let him smoke in here?" Why, should I say, when Dick glooms over a dull business year: "If you would economize on smoking you wouldn't notice it so much!" Why do not my good manners, assiduously cultivated, prevent me from nagging my son-in-law and hectoring my daughter?

I will tell you why I think that my courtesy and the courtesy of George's mother-in-law, and of half the old people of my acquaintance, fail us constantly. It is because we think our manners are formed. We believe that they require no more watching, at our age, than do our morals. We know that we're not going to take to bank robbing or eloping, or second-story work. Our morals are so firmly established that there is almost no possibility, except through some sudden neutral derangement, of our going to jail. And we lightly assume that our manners are in the same state of crystallization.

But they are not, or, if they are, they should not be so. They should be fluent, warm, kindly—the gracious atmosphere in which we live and have our intercourse with such of the world as has its work still to do. Ours, for the most part, is done. We are here—let us not blink the hard fact—we are here in this workaday world on tolerance. The love of our children strives to disguise the bitter truth; but it is there. For the most part, our work is done, and we are in the world on tolerance. And there is nothing that will make us so easily tolerable as the studious cultivation of good manners—which is still a term denoting exactly what it did when we were young and read all the good little books of maxims. It denotes patience, sympathy, kindness.

And, on the whole, it adds a new interest to life to realize that even at sixty-five one may begin a new study, or take up again an old study; that one is not yet, after all, beyond the possibility of change, of improvement.

A MATCH THAT STRUCK FIRE

By HOLMAN F. DAY

ILLUSTRATED BY
VICTOR PERARD

TO Captain Albannah Newt, late of the deep seas and newly settled in Scotaze, and to Captain Newt alone, did Cap'n Sproul ever confide the real story of how it happened. To the masonry of master mariners, pineapple rum, and the melody of a parlor organ could be traced that confidence.

When the news went abroad in Cuxabaxis County that Cap'n Aaron Sproul had resigned as high sheriff, and that his chief deputy had been appointed by the governor to fill out the term, the folks were surprised. Cap'n Aaron Sproul himself was more surprised than any one else. But he concealed that astonishment, and went home to Scotaze with mingled emotions. Not even to his wife did he reveal the inwardness of that event. He grimly accepted her delighted assurances that it was on her account he had resigned a hateful office that kept him away from home so much.

With wifely fear that time might hang heavy on his hands, after the bustle that had beset him at the shire, she hastened to inform him that one Captain Albannah Newt had settled in town.

Cap'n Sproul brightened perceptibly. He had been pondering sourly on that resignation that morning. The method of it would rise up occasionally and slap him in the face, in spite of the general relief he felt in being rid of cares and annoyances.

"He has hired the old Bray stand, and has moved in, and is keeping bach hall," said Louada Murilla. "He doesn't mix with anybody in town; but I know you and he would hitch horses well, both being seafaring men. He'll be tickled to death to have you call.



I'm sure he will! And he looks enough like you to be your brother."

"It ain't in the nature of master mariners to run up to each other and hug and kiss," stated Cap'n Sproul conservatively. "He's no one I ever heard of in deep-water circles."

But the news of some one of his own ilk in town piqued his interest, and the next time he walked down to the village he surveyed the old Bray house with special attention.

A short and sturdy man was trudging to and fro on the porch, squinting "aloft" at each turn—the habit of the quarter-deck still strong in him.

Cap'n Sproul marched past without sign of recognition, walked more slowly after he was past, hesitated, halted—then turned on his heel, and went back. He flourished a sailor salute as he went in at the gate; and Cap'n Newt met him at the head of the porch steps with outstretched hand.

"I've heard about you since I've settled here in town, Cap'n Sproul," he hastened to inform his visitor. "And I was readin' in the paper the other day that you had resigned as high sheriff."

"B'lieve there was some word about it," said Cap'n Sproul curtly. Unpleas-

ant memory again assailed him. "Them blasted papers have to fill up with something, I suppose!"

"I never had no prominence that would get me into the papers," stated the other. "Gulf ports, most of life, in the schooner *Sadie and Thankful*."

"That's why I never run against you. Mine was the *Jefferson P. Benn*—River Plate and South America trade."

They looked at each other, instantly drawn by the masonry of mutual interests, and yet hedging their first intercourse with shipboard etiquette.

The host bowed the way to the front door of the Bray house.

"Do me the compliment to step below, Cap'n Sproul."

"With pleasure and thanks, Cap'n Newt."

In the old parlor, furnished as sparsely as a schooner's cabin, Cap'n Newt produced a bottle and some glasses.

"A little old pineapple rum, Cap'n Sproul! I never indulge except in port, and when all canvas is snug."

"Seein' that the mudhook is well set, I'll join you, Cap'n Newt, for the sake of sociability; and here's to further pleasant acquaintance."

They touched glasses.

"There's nothin' like startin' a friendship right," suggested Cap'n Newt; "and I've always found enough of the mellow in pineapple rum to soften the feelin's, and enough of the sweet in it to stick said feelin's together once they've been softened. Here's to brains and brick dust, Cap'n Sproul! If we can't make history, we can scour knives!"

It was a somewhat cryptic toast; but the guest drank, and smacked his lips.

"And now," suggested the host, "if a whiff of pipe smoke and a few turns in the lee alley would suit you, let's go on deck."

For an hour they tramped up and down the porch, swapping narratives. It was a bland day and a happy meeting, and, when Cap'n Newt at last suggested that they "go below" again, Cap'n Sproul assented cheerfully.

"As the feller used to sing," re-

marked Cap'n Newt, producing the bottle and glasses,

"Wheel is in the beackets, the sea is nice and calm,
And another leetle drink won't do us any harm."

"This time it's to fiddles and boxin' gloves," said Cap'n Sproul, ready with his own bit of a mariner's toast. "If you can't play dance tunes, you can keep your hands warm!"

He eyed the "slick" of the rum on the side of the glass with quizzical squint, and then gulped his dram in unison with his host.

"Speakin' of singin' and tunes," observed Cap'n Newt, "do you indulge in singin'?"

"Spoiled my voice when young, singin' riddle-fang-de-dando to Portygee sailors," with scant encouragement in his tone for any further pursuit of that subject. But Cap'n Newt pointed to a battered parlor organ in one corner of the room.

"Always had that to sea with me," he stated. "Let the wind rage and the billows toss, I could always soothe myself and drive dull care away. Set down and be comfortable, and I'll give you one or two of my favorites."

The guest did not display particular enthusiasm; but, as a guest, he understood his duty in the matter. He sat on the edge of a chair, and listened sourly to a song that Cap'n Newt sang with droning accompaniment, rocking to and fro with great energy in pedaling. The song was something about "Bold Jonathan then walked the deck, a-lookin' all aloft, sir"; but the listener did not pay especial attention to the words. The second song was in minor key, dealing with the theme of friendship "on the rolling wave," and did something to take the edge off Cap'n Sproul's resentment at this mode of entertaining him.

"I was thinkin' I might find time hang heavy, leavin' the sea as I've done," confessed the singer at the end of the second song, desisting and filling his pipe, to the immense relief of his audience. "But I don't reckon I will. There's always music to soothe me, and

I shall enjoy your runnin' in. I suppose you'll be takin' it easy now yourself, gettin' out of public office as you be."

In thinking it over afterward, Cap'n Sproul never could determine exactly what prompted him to take Cap'n Newt into his confidence so suddenly. It may have been the combined influence of the pineapple rum and the organ music, the desire to tell some one of a curious happening, or the determination to sacrifice his secret rather than listen to any more organ music.

"Speakin' of gettin' out of public office, Cap'n Newt," he blurted, "in the first place, as one sailor to another, I want to warn you against ever gettin' in. Don't you let 'em shanghai you! There'll be a story to tell you on that later."

He took a long breath.

"I'm out, and I'm out to stay. I got yanked in as high sheriff when I wasn't lookin'. And I yanked myself out when I didn't know I was doin' it. As one master mariner to another, and as a little proof of friendship, I'll tell you how it happened. About a year ago I got mad and disgusted with the blasted, infernal job, and I set down one day and wrote a letter to the governor, resignin'. Just got it finished and backed, sealed, and the stamp on when something came up to make me mad another way, and I stuffed the letter into my desk, and decided to stay on bein' high sheriff till I'd got even with some folks in this county. But I was mad when I wrote that letter; and there wasn't any mistakin' that I wanted to resign when the governor came to read it! And I'd forgotten all about it, and when he wrote me that he'd accepted the resignation, I was——"

"But you never sent it, you said," interposed Cap'n Newt, who had been following the narration with interest and puzzled wonder. "Mebbe that pineapple rum has confused me; but you said——"

"My turnkey, who kept himself busy 'tendin' to all the things round that office that he hadn't ought to 'tend to, came across the letter in the desk about

five days ago, and sent it. You've seen that kind of a feller in your time, I reckon? 'Board ship he'd be careful to steer around a cloud shadder, and then go to work and pile her onto a reef, where white water was breakin' twenty feet high. All is, I found myself resigned out of office all of a sudden, and here I be, and you're the only one I've let on to about how it happened."

"I'd have writ right along and took it back," stated Cap'n Newt, with decision.

"I'd have looked nice doin' it," retorted Cap'n Sproul, with acerbity. "You said a while ago that you saw it in the papers. Well, it got into the papers from the governor's end. There wasn't anything left for me to do but stay resigned, and come home. But I ain't complainin', you understand. I'm glad of it. I came here off the sea to settle and take it easy, just as you are doin'. I got dragged into office, not meanin' to be dragged in. You take lesson from me. If they come around offerin' you honors or jobs, you just set down to that parlor organ and begin to sing."

"Not meanin' that as a hint that my singin' is the best thing to drive folks away?"

"No such slur intended, Cap'n Newt. I mean, don't get into any talk or argument with 'em. Sing just as though you'd forgotten any one was around the place. Show 'em that you don't take any interest in 'em."

"I ain't in anyways inclined to public office, and I haven't encouraged any mixin' up in my business since I've settled here," stated Cap'n Newt.

"So my wife tells me," the cap'n hastened to inform him. "And speakin' of her, there's what you ought to do, Cap'n Newt—stay out of office and get into matrimony. I came ashore just as you've done; but I didn't know what livin', and happiness, and comfort was till I found the right woman, and married her."

Cap'n Sproul, warming to his subject, had his ardor considerably dampened by the sour and rebellious stare that Cap'n Newt turned on him.



He sat on the edge of a chair, and listened sourly to a song that Cap'n Newt sang with droning accompaniment.

"I'll talk of p'isen, pirates, sudden death, and hell fire, and relish the subjects; but don't you talk marryin' to me," he snapped. "I've got a song on that." He turned toward the organ. "It is——"

"I'd love to hear it," the cap'n hastened to assure him, a bit ruffled by his host's prompt bristling at him, and in no mood to listen to more melody; "but I'll be late to dinner. I'm sorry you feel as you do on a tender subject—but that ain't goin' to prevent us bein' good friends—and passin' the time pleasant together."

"For me, I never passed hails with a sailor I liked better on short acquaintance," vouchsafed the other heartily, shaking him by the hand at the porch steps. "Ladder's always over the side for you, and you'll never find the locker dry."

At dinner, Cap'n Sproul gave his wife an altogether satisfactory account of their new neighbor.

"I reckon he averages as well as human bein's generally do, Louada Murilla. He's sentimentaler than I relish on the music question, and he ain't as sentimental as I'd like on the matter of havin' a good wife. He's come

ashore with a hard shell, like I had. He don't realize what he's missin'. I feel that it's goin' to be my duty to wake him up. It comes hard to make some of these old baches take their medicine—not meanin' any disrespect to wimmen in sayin' that—but once it's down they wonder why they've been nursin' an ache so long. I'll get at that old turtle!"

"It has made my heart sink every time I've passed the Bray place, and seen him stamping up and down that porch all alone," declared Louada Murilla, ready with her sympathy. "It made me think of you, all alone as you were, when you first came to town here among strangers. I wish Diadema Bellmore could catch him, if he's as good as what you say he is. She's got her own home, and money in the bank—and that Bray place is more'n half gone to rack and ruin, it's been empty so many years. She'd make him a good wife. I thought of her first."

"Dropped any hints?"

"Well, I've always cracked up sea captains to her for husbands, and on that account he'd find her more'n half courted," returned Louada Murilla, with a smile and a pretty blush that

deepened when Cap'n Sproul came around the table and gave her a hearty smack.

"I'm glad I got boosted out of that office," he blurted, his recent talk with Cap'n Newt having cracked his reticence on a certain subject.

He bethought himself, and turned brick red when she stared at him and echoed: "Boosted out?"

"Newt has got me to talkin' sea lingo," he explained lamely, unable to look her in the eyes. "Boosted the way sailors use it is different in meanin' from what it is on shore."

But it was a subject that he was not willing to pursue just then, and he clapped on his hat and hurried out. He had not intended to make a second call on his new neighbor that day; but he found himself on the road, and no errand in the village invited him. So he turned in at the gate of the old Bray place.

The drone of the parlor organ, threading among the raucous tones of Cap'n Newt's voice, nearly availed to turn him back; but he ascended "the quarter-deck" in the fond hope of being able to divert the singer from his music. The words of that song interested him, though the melody did not.

"You do not have to teach the snake to sting the human heel,
Nor teach the wolf to bite your hand, nor
hyenys how to steal.
And as for wimmen's tricks, and frauds, and
handy ways to do 'em,
Why, wimmen know 'em ev'ry one, them
things come nat'ral to 'em."

"Chorus," shouted Cap'n Newt, in the same volume of voice with which he would have hailed the foretop in a gale, and added:

"Them's my idees, them's my idees, without
no sort o' trimmin'.
I'll take a snake to nuss and tend, instead of
wimmen, wimmen."

Cap'n Sproul signalized his presence by a cough, and Cap'n Newt promptly gave over music and came out to greet his guest.

But the guest did not consider that Cap'n Newt was in the mood that day to listen to any preachment on women

in general, or Diadema Bellmore in particular. They walked "the quarter-deck" for two hours, and argued whether a coasting skipper ought to anchor in a seaway and wallow out a head gale, or stand off and take the chances of wear and tear of sails and running gear.

At supper, Cap'n Sproul confided to his wife that, in his opinion, Cap'n Newt had been crossed in love by some undeserving female; and he quoted such words of the song as he could remember, to her pained astonishment. Cap'n Sproul wound up his remarks by stoutly asserting that in the interests of his neighbor's peace of mind he proposed to find out the sore place, and heal it.

At the end of a week of intimacy, the amateur soul surgeon admitted to himself that he had found the sore place. He found it often. He found it every time he got his courage up to mention women or marriage to his new friend. The blistering and baleful glances that Cap'n Newt bent on him at these times brought him up short. With great resoluteness, the patient kept his mouth shut. Never by a hint did he reveal just what affront he had suffered to make him so bitter. He merely sat back and glowered so ferociously that Cap'n Sproul hastened to get off the subject upon which he had craftily entered. It was plain that Cap'n Newt did not propose to make a confession to him.

This attitude offended Cap'n Sproul, for he reflected that he, on his part, had reposed confidence in Cap'n Newt upon a tender subject at their first meeting. He ventured to hint a little something on this line to Cap'n Newt one day, adding that if any word of it ever leaked out life wouldn't be worth living in that county, because every man he met would grin in his face and laugh behind his back.

"It's dangerous business, passin' your secrets round," agreed the neighbor gloomily, and with a note in his tone that the cap'n did not relish. "It's all right to put a rope round your neck; but when you go and give the loose end of it to some one, you're li'ble to have your wizen squat when you ain't expect-

in' it. I don't say that I would ever use a secret, if one was given to me, for a weapon; but a feller never knows how desperit he's goin' to get. As supple and genteel as I always try to be with them I come in contact with, I don't know as I'd want to have a secret over a feller that was pokin' me."

It was not exactly a veiled threat, but it moderated Cap'n Sproul's zeal considerably in the matter of prying into Cap'n Newt's state of mind on the woman question. For many days he confined himself strictly to topics relating to rigging, courses, trips, cargoes, and general maritime matters. Cap'n Newt expanded into frank and endearing qualities as a friend.

"When I hid myself up here," he confessed one day, thereby dropping unguardedly a hint that made Cap'n Sproul prick up his ears, "I didn't have the least idea I was goin' to run into a man I like as well as I do you."

On his own part, Cap'n Sproul returned that compliment, and expressed the hope that Cap'n Newt proposed to pass his last days in Scotaze.

"There's nothin' sure about that. I'm only hirin' this house. As you might say, I've got cable hove short. Mebbe I'll stay. Mebbe not. The way I'm fixed, I never know when it's goin' to be up-killick."

There was sour melancholy in his features that stirred Cap'n Sproul's sympathies. He thought he knew what the matter was with Cap'n Newt. When he himself had first settled in Scotaze, keeping bachelor's hall and living out of his sea chest, he had felt that same way. Now—a happy home—a good wife! He stared at the solemn face of his friend, fiddling his finger under his nose, and was almost ready to risk breaking in on that happy calm that had lately marked their friendship. He felt it might be a happy moment for another word regarding matrimony.

Furthermore, now that he was himself out of active affairs, the thought of living in Scotaze without the companionship of a man with whom he "could talk something more sensible than fodder and folderol," as he explained it to

Louada Murilla, was not a pleasant thought. He wanted to see Cap'n Newt as securely anchored as he was himself.

"All is," he pondered, "I've got to take Diadema and that farm of hers, and rig a bridle anchor that'll hold him."

For another week, keeping close guard over his tongue, he lulled any suspicions that Cap'n Newt might have entertained at first, and then he invited him over to supper. Other somewhat perfunctory invitations of the sort in the past had been declined by Cap'n Newt, who had allowed that he was not out for society, and had got so used to his own cooking that he hated to try experiments. This last invitation was pressed, and Cap'n Newt accepted.

Louada Murilla had suggested the pressing part of the invitation, and the plot was her own. Diadema Bellmore was a more or less innocent participant, though the import of Mrs. Sproul's various encomiums and hints had not been lost on her. To Cap'n Sproul was left the nice duty of exorcising any demon of distrust that might arise in Cap'n Newt's bosom.

Mrs. Sproul found her husband well advanced in this task when she came to them in the parlor, prettily flushed with her duties in the kitchen. Cap'n Sproul was giving his guest a dissertation on the picturesque features of "Bonis Aires"; and Cap'n Newt had forgotten the existence of women until this one appeared to him.

He rose and scraped an awkward bow, and stood a resigned and expectant picture of hope that she would soon retire.

"Captain Newt," she said, pretending embarrassment very handsomely, "my husband has proved to me that sea captains are always good-natured. I'm sure that any one who looks so much like my husband must be just like him in disposition. A—a relative—a—a dear cousin of mine has dropped in unexpectedly; and, of course, I've just *had* to ask her to stay to tea with us. It will be a family party just the same—and I know you won't mind an extra guest."



He found himself under the necessity of passing to the lady the various dishes that the cap'n loaded with food.

"Fam'ly party—no frills and no furbelows!" cried Cap'n Sproul heartily. "The more the merrier, as the whale said to the herring!"

But the guest did not seem to be overcome with merriment. He made an instinctive motion behind him, as though groping for his hat, and was plainly searching his soul for words with which to sound retreat, but Mrs. Sproul was too quick for him. She bobbed a curtsy, and left the room with a smile that expressed her conviction that all was nicely settled.

"It ain't a square deal," blurted Cap'n Newt, facing Cap'n Sproul and scowling at him.

"Meanin'?" inquired his host, stiffening and returning the scowl in a manner that discomposd Cap'n Newt so much that he remained silent.

"Nothin' goin' to be said, I hope, as a hint that my wife is riggin' up a derick to bunko you—or anything of the sort?"

"No remarks have been made meanin' that at all," Cap'n Newt hastened to assure him.

"Or that I am?" pursued the host.

"I ain't ever been in society, and I ain't cut out for society, and I don't relish it."

"You're talkin' about this little, innocent, quiet supper at my house—just you and me, the missus and our favorite niece——"

"She said 'cousin,'" cried Cap'n Newt, suspicion flaming in his eyes.

"Then it prob'ly is cousin. I ain't so good on fam'ly pedigree as my wife is. But what I say is, this ain't no crowned-head banquet that you're goin' to set down to. There ain't goin' to be any Emp'r or Peru or Lord Gull or Queen of Sheby at it. You don't mean to stand there and tell me, do you, Newt, that you're too stuck up to eat with my wife's sister?"

In his heat, Cap'n Sproul was making havoc in the relationship part of the plot, and Cap'n Newt caught him up on his slip—feeling himself sinking, and willing to grasp at a straw for the sake of diverting attention from the real topic.

"If they're all out there, them that you're talkin' about, then I must have fell in on a fam'ly reunion," he growled.

"There's just one woman out there, and she won't eat you or make love to you, you needn't worry. You ain't good-lookin' enough. Now, let me tell you, Newt, you and me is good friends, and we want to stay so, for we're interestin' to each other. But friendship jibes terrible easy if you don't keep a firm hand on the tiller. Can you tell me what earthly objection you've got to settin' down at my table, in the bosom of my fam'ly, in good company? You haven't got any secret about you to make it troublesome, have you?"

If Cap'n Sproul thought that he was to corkscrew out of Newt the reasons for his mysterious antipathy to women in this energetic manner, he was mistaken. Cap'n Newt turned on him that familiar, baleful gaze with which he was wont to greet remarks on the subject of women, and was silent. His interlocutor gazed at him disappointedly. It had really seemed a ripe moment for plucking a secret and a confession.

"I hope you ain't goin' to act anything but a gent to the womenfolks in my house," insisted Cap'n Sproul.

"I'll go home," mumbled Cap'n Newt sullenly. "There's nineteen sides to the woman question, and ev'ry side means trouble for me. Here's a fair sample!"

"Would that be actin' like a gent to sneak away from my house when a meal's all ready, and you're the special guest? I ask you that."

"All I'm askin' is to be let go before it gets to be worse." There was humble pleading in the guest's tones. "I ain't ever done anything to you, Cap'n Sproul, except what's been friendly and genteel. Now, have I? There's some things about me you don't know." Cap'n Sproul displayed prompt and fresh interest. "Nor you ain't goin' to know 'em. They're private and special." His host scowled. "Women is dangerouser'n rattlesnakes where I'm concerned. Now, that's the plain fact. You ain't the kind of a man that wants to bring trouble onto an innocent friend?"

"Well, if you ain't a riddle-come-riddle-come-ree, done into a human package and parceled with marline in hard knots, then I never see one!" snorted Cap'n Sproul.

"I know my own business better'n you know it," retorted Cap'n Newt doggedly. "And I know when I ain't wanted in any man's house. You needn't call me any more names. I'll be movin' on."

But Cap'n Sproul grasped him by the arm at the first step he made.

"I don't want to have no scuffle with you right here in my own parlor, Newt; but I want to distinctly inform you that when a man accepts an invite to eat with me in the bosom of my fam'ly, and comes, and don't give me no good reason why he's got to leave, he stays and eats. That's simply a word to the wise."

For a moment the flames of utter rebellion blazed in Cap'n Newt's eyes.

"Is this the general way you take with your friends, or be you only makin' a special case of me?" he inquired.

"Do you usually have to shanghai what company you invite to tea?"

"Now, don't let's you and me pass slurs and twits, Newt," expostulated the captain, in more pacificatory manner. "Two skippers like us can't afford to do it. I don't know, of course, what private reasons you've got for sneakin' off; but I stand here, a friend of yours, and tell you that I'll take on me any responsibility for anything that may happen to you. You ain't dealin' with old Cap'n Teach, the pirate king—but, if you feel you need a guarantee, there it is."

"Go ahead and take the responsibility, then," said Cap'n Newt, sitting down. "But you remember you said it, when the time comes that I throw it up to you."

The embarrassment of the situation was relieved by Mrs. Sproul's genial announcement at the door that supper was served. The host took the precaution of walking behind his guest, as though to prevent any possible adventure at escape.

A buxom lady was standing modestly at the farther side of the dining room.

"Captain Newt, I wish you'd shake hands with Miss Diadema Bellmore, our mutual neighbor," invited Mrs. Sproul.

And Cap'n Newt met the other guest halfway, and obeyed, noting in the somber depths of his soul that Mrs. Sproul had merely called her "neighbor."

"Cousin, niece, sister—neighbor!" he pondered sourly. "There don't seem to be much head nor tail to the riggin' aboard this craft! There's some kind of a cussed scheme on here!"

He found himself seated between Miss Bellmore and the host, and also found himself under the necessity of passing to the lady the various dishes that the cap'n loaded with food. Even as he had been fairly pushed into the dining room by Cap'n Sproul, now that artful gentleman was behind him in the matter of pushing him into conversation with his fair neighbor. He was poked up into the narration of his best tale—how he had come through on a schooner that had twice rolled over in a seaway

under bare poles. And whenever, during the repast, Miss Bellmore asked a question—she evinced a remarkable thirst for information on maritime affairs—Cap'n Sproul always referred her politely to his friend.

"He's fresher from the sea than I be, Cap'n Newt is. You'll get the clear gospel from him, marm, full and to the point."

It was a distressful evening that Cap'n Newt passed, judging from his countenance, though he eventually found himself talking away with a garbularity that afforded Cap'n Sproul immense satisfaction.

The guest had entertained a vague hope that he might slip home in creditable fashion while the women "were doing the dishes." But at the end of the supper the hired girl appeared, and the little party of four adjourned to the parlor.

"It's plenty big enough for two," cried Cap'n Sproul, gayly pushing him down on the sofa where Miss Bellmore had seated herself. "The beauty of our house is folks always get sociable with each other."

But it was no sociable gaze that Cap'n Newt fixed on his host. He sat on the edge of the sofa, revolving his thumbs over and over each other, regarded Miss Bellmore suspiciously out of the corners of his eyes, and kept up his end of the conversation without enthusiasm.

At nine o'clock, Cap'n Newt's face cleared perceptibly. Miss Bellmore glanced up at the clock, and declared that she really must be starting for home.

"It's been such pleasant company, I had no idea it was getting so late," she declared, both apology and alarm in her tones. "I'm timid out alone so late."

"Timid with a man like him to beau you to your door?" asked the jovial Cap'n Sproul. "There's no gallant sea captain yet who ever let a lady walk alone in fear and tremblin'."

Real anguish had replaced the glimmer of relief on the guest's countenance.

Cap'n Sproul acknowledged to himself that at that moment Newt was a desperate man if he ever saw one. The victim even managed to work one or two husky words of protest out of his dry throat, but only Cap'n Sproul understood. Miss Bellmore was accepting with such radiant volubility that the unhappy escort followed her speechlessly into the hall and to the outer door. As he went down the steps, Cap'n Sproul gave him a nudge in the ribs with his thumb. Cap'n Newt turned one blistering glance over his shoulder, and the dusk swallowed up Miss Bellmore and him.

you, Louada Murilla, we've made a dretful good start toward a match there. She took right to him, like all women take to a quiet, sensible man who doesn't hair-oil 'em all over with fool gush the first time they meet."

He took the cat under his arm, puffed out the parlor light, and started for the rear of the house on his mission of locking up.

"There's a long winter ahead of us, Louada Murilla; and, if we can hurry this thing a little, we've got a mighty pleasant couple for euchre and old sledge partners."

The next morning Cap'n Sproul, fin-



From a position in the middle of the road he began speech vehemently.

"I hope we haven't made any mistake in tying up to that man as we have," said Mrs. Sproul when they were back in the parlor. "He isn't as pleasant-favored near to as he seemed to be at a distance. That last look he gave you, unless the lamplight fooled me, was enough to curdle one's blood."

"Pestered 'most to death with corns on the bottoms of his feet, so he confided to me this evenin'," explained the cap'n. "He's the mildest-tempered man I ever see—and shy as an infant. I understand that disposition in a seafarin' man when he's new on shore. I tell

ishing a leisurely breakfast, received some interesting information from the hired girl.

"That cap'n who was here last night to supper is promenadin' up and down in the road outside, stampin' up dust at a great rate. 'Cause he seemed to be waitin', I asked him if he wouldn't come in, and he shook his fist at me."

She betook herself to the kitchen with an injured air.

Mrs. Sproul detected a vague look of apprehension in her husband's eyes when her startled glance met his.

"I tell you, Aaron," she declared,

"there's a look in that man's face that would——"

"That female galley-walloper can't tell the difference between a sheet of johnnycake and a sailor's ordinary, cheerful hand wave," he hastened to inform his wife.

But he did not remain to pursue the subject with her. He jumped up from the table, grabbed his hat from the hall stand in passing, and hustled out and down the walk to the gate.

There was no doubt that Cap'n Newt was waiting for him. From a position in the middle of the road he began speech vehemently, flourishing his arms. It was not a spectacle that Cap'n Sproul cared to have his wife gaze on. And the character of the language in which Cap'n Newt opened his case for the plaintiff was not especially suitable for women's ears. With an air that seemed friendly, surveyed from a distance, but with a clutch that meant business, Cap'n Sproul grabbed his neighbor's arm, and hustled him off down the road.

"Now, Newt," he advised, "stop hailin' the crosstrees, and pass the time o' day quieter. Didn't catch dyspepsy at my house last evenin', did ye?"

"I ketched hell, that's what I ketched!" sputtered his captive. "And you've been to work and shoved me into it. I pleaded, and argued, and begged, and you went ahead and done it just the same. You don't know my business, you don't! But you froze me in where I couldn't get out. And I walked home with her. And I met six or eight of the blasted old gossipers of this place, and they can see in the night better'n owls, and it's all over town! The man that brought me my pint of milk this mornin' grinned and twitted me about shinin' up to Miss Bellmore. Two men called on an excuse to sell me garden sass, and badgered me about weddin' cake and so forth. It don't need half as much as you've made me do to get 'em to gabblin' in a place like this."

His voice broke, and he seemed to lack for words.

"Go ahead," advised Cap'n Sproul. "If you've got more of that kind of gall and bitterness inside of you, you'd bet-

ter get it all out. Only, near's I can find out, you're havin' a catnip fit just because you've done an act of common politeness that any one would do unless he lived in a pen and had a grunt and brustles. But go ahead! If you talk long enough you'll show up what you really be."

"Well, you've got to square this thing for me, that's what you've got to do. You said you'd be responsible. Now, go ahead, and be responsible."

"Responsible for what?" inquired Cap'n Sproul, with a dry note of menace in his voice.

"For havin' me posted in this town for doin' what I haven't intended nor don't intend."

"How'll you have it—item in the newspaper, given out next Sunday by the minister, or play-carded on Boardway's store? Said notice to read, as I gather from your remarks: 'Inquirin' friends warned that my intentions toward Miss Diadema Bellmore, though honorable, are in no ways serious.'"

"Keep it up," said Cap'n Newt brokenly. "It seems to be your game to ram me in and under—though what you've got against me is more than I can figger. Keep it up!"

"Look here, Newt, since you need plain, straight sense, you're goin' to get it! What the matter is with you I can't understand; but it's plain that you're ailin' bad some way. Never had a sunstroke, or nothin' to make you li'ble to sudden notions about things what there ain't none of?"

Cap'n Sproul was a pretty hard man to put out of countenance; but he flinched before the look that his neighbor turned on him.

"I don't mean no offense, Newt," he hastened to say, after stammering a bit. "But you're runnin' on in a way that's mighty insultin' to a respectable woman in this neighborhood. What do think Miss Bellmore, with a nice farm, well stocked, and nigh ten thousand dollars in the bank, and one or two mortgages on real estate——" Captain Sproul watched narrowly to see whether the recital of these advantages did not impress the recalcitrant; but Cap'n Newt



"I'd like to have Cap'n Newt drop in to-morrow and I'll—I'll—try to give him his answer."

remained somber. "What do you think such a woman wants of an old, bow-legged salt haddock like you? You've gone to work and rigged a plain chip of common politeness out with canvas enough to drive a brigantine's nose under. Now, you ain't goin' to stand up before me and insult my wife's best friend, be you?"

"Keep it up!" apostrophized Cap'n Newt. "Keep it up! Where wimmen are concerned I expect trouble, and a lot of it, and so I ain't bein' disappointed a mite. Keep it up!"

"It's too much like beatin' a rug to try to talk sense into you," growled Cap'n Sprout, suddenly taken aback by this supineness. "But you're sayin'

that you hold me responsible for such gear as has been carried by the board when you collided with Miss Bellmore. Very well! What I'm responsible for, that I'll take care of—and to the queen's taste. You come along o' me!"

"Where to?" asked Cap'n Newt, fresh alarm on his countenance.

"Never you mind. If I'm to be responsible, then I'll be responsible. And you and me know enough of rules and regulations aboard ship to understand that a responsible skipper don't ask advice of his mate. I'm in command. Come along!"

He seized Cap'n Newt's limp arm and hurried him down the street.

At the gate of Miss Bellmore's house—it was to that house Cap'n Sprout had rushed him—he made

desperate resistance. But the sight of Miss Bellmore at the door suddenly cowed Newt. He went along up the walk.

Miss Bellmore's face grew very rosy at sight of them. She wore an expression of embarrassment that hinted at some personal knowledge of the gossip that was freshly flourishing in the little neighborhood. But she invited them to come in, and they went in, Cap'n Sprout acting as file closer. They entered a parlor that was so neat that Cap'n Newt edged in on tiptoe.

"There would be quite a sermon to preach to start with, Miss Bellmore, touchin' on and pertainin' to the kind of duck-billed old gossips we have in this

town—provided you needed any such information,” began Cap’n Sproul, sitting well forward on his chair to avoid mussing a tidy, like the trained husband that he was. “So we’ll omit that. And we’ll get to business quick, because that’s sailorman style.”

Miss Bellmore promptly became very much confused; but smiled and nodded.

“Here’s a friend of mine that I vouch for. He’s as square as a cathead, and straight as a belayin’ pin. What he means he means, and what he says he says—and it’s just the same when I say it, havin’ been on shore longer than he has, and understandin’ better how to say it. He walked home with you last night from my house. Now, there wouldn’t be much of anything in that if it had happened anywhere else than in Scotaze. You get what I mean?”

Still more overwhelmed, Miss Bellmore nodded.

“When I came here to town and looked around,” pursued the cap’n, “I found the right woman, God bless her! and married and settled before they had a chance to get their tongues goin’.”

“I remember it was a very short courtship,” ventured Miss Bellmore, in trembling tones; “but I’ll say that Miss Ward might have looked the world over and not made a better match.”

“You hear that, Newt!” cried the spokesman jubilantly.

Cap’n Newt was goggling at the two of them, plainly lost in wonderment as to what all this prologue tended.

“Now, the idee is, marm, gettin’ back to the subject of what has happened between you and my good friend here, he has asked me, as bein’ in some way responsible for your meetin’, to talk for him. He wants to have you set right in this neighborhood, prompt and sudden, and to the satisfaction of all concerned. He wants—”

“Just one moment, Cap’n Sproul—and Cap’n Newt,” broke in Miss Bellmore. Her cheeks were scarlet and her eyes were bright. But it was not anger. Her voice was appealing. “I see what you’re leading up to. I realize why you are so much interested, Cap’n Sproul. But you know what a woman’s feelings

are when anything like this comes on ’em so sudden. I haven’t got the courage right now to sit and hear you say it out loud. I’ll simply say now that I’m honored and flattered—and I’d like to have Cap’n Newt drop in to-morrow, and I’ll—I’ll—try to give him his answer. I know you’ll excuse my feelings in the matter, and will understand, Cap’n Newt. But a woman is only a woman—and sudden things upset ’em.”

Her voice broke, and she rose to hide her emotion, ushering them to the door with her handkerchief at her face.

For a moment Cap’n Sproul had remained on the edge of his chair, his mouth open, stupefaction on his face. When he had somewhat recovered his composure, he was obliged to push Cap’n Newt off his chair. That gentleman sat, stricken and voiceless.

They marched out into the highway, Cap’n Newt clutching at his windpipe and making queer, husky, clucking sounds in his throat.

“Well,” gasped Cap’n Sproul, after a long exhalation of breath, “that is dumfired queer, if ever I see a queer thing happen. I was only leadin’ up to a nice apology for you gettin’ her talked about.”

He did not dare to look at Cap’n Newt.

“Only leadin’ up to explain that what you done was in the way of plain, neighborly kindness—and she grabbed in and took it that way! I reckon that Louada Murilla must have had her half courted for you. By the blue peter! But wimmen is quick on the trigger sometimes!”

His friend was still struggling with his voice.

“But there ain’t no real harm done,” went on Cap’n Sproul encouragingly. “It only happened a little sooner than it otherwise naturally would. It’s a prime good match for you, Newt. All you’ve got to do is to go ’round to-morrow and get your ‘Yes.’”

“What have you done to me—what have you done to me? See what you’ve done to me, you cussed old horn-gilled sculpin!” squealed Cap’n Newt. “You infernal old foghorn, with a mouth like

the main hatch of a Port Clyde brick scow—you——"

"You ain't fit to talk with, if you're feelin' like that at a time when you ought to be turnin' handsprings for joy," rebuked his spokesman.

"You've gone to work and proposed to her for me, that's what you've done! You've got me into a mess I'll never get out of! I'll bang that old gurry-butt head of yours into seventeen imitations of a 'Tinicus jellyfish if you don't go back there and——"

He was advancing with flourishing fists; but Cap'n Sproul thrust him away with a push that sent him staggering into the gutter.

"I don't propose to stand here in the middle of the ro'd and make a spectacle of myself with a man in your state of mind," said the cap'n reprovingly. "And if you don't want me to help you run your business, why, take it into your own hands and run it from now

out. It's too messy for me to meddle with it."

He whirled on his heel and trudged off toward his home, leaving Cap'n Newt sitting on the rock in the gutter to which he had staggered, his fingers in his hair, his elbows propped on his knees.

"That was sartinly an astonisher for a proposal," soliloquized Cap'n Sproul; "but many's the good match that has been started off in just that kind of jump-and-catch-it style. I'll leave him to wrassle out his own salvation. I never believe in messin' up too much in a man's love affairs."

But he stopped several times, and gazed back at a red chimney that marked the location of Miss Diadema's house, an expression of dizzy wonder in his eyes.

"If he follows his hand and gets her," he muttered, "I reckon I'll take out papers as an A. B. assistant Cupid."

It may occur to the reader that Captain Albannah Newt, left with a secret and an involuntary proposal of marriage on his hands, requires further attention. In a story, "Fixing It for Cap'n Newt," to appear in the October number of SMITH'S, such attention will be given.



Exiled

MY mother's told me stories
Of her land overseas,
Of apple trees in blossom
An' the hummin' o' the bees;

So sometimes in my daydreams
I go walkin' in the lane
Betwixt the English hedgerows
A-shimm'rin' in the rain.

But on a moonlight night in May,
When I lie in my room,
An' smell the driftin' fragrance
O' the apple trees in bloom,

Most then I pine to see it,
Her island home so green,
An' I fair could die o' longin'
For a land I've never seen.

ELIZABETH BIDDLECOME.



BY WALLACE
IRWIN

Economy

ILLUSTRATED
BY HY. MAYER

OF all the marineers what sail
From Nome to Yucatan,
If I'm a judge,
Old Capting Scrudge
Was sure the meanest man.

He saved on food, he saved on coal,
He fed us milk, blue-thinned.
On stormy days
Full sail he'd raise
So's not to waste the wind.

He never wasted words—in fact,
It scared him half to death
For fear some day,
In a careless way,
He'd waste an ounce o' breath.

He never painted of our ship,
Though she was rotting nigh.
On greasy decks
We risked our necks,
'Cause scouring soap came high.

Though once he fed us ham and eggs,
On which we dined like swells,
Soon came a pause
On eggs—because
We wouldn't eat the shells.

So goes me tale from bad to worse—
One day off Kill van Kull
An awful sea
Bumped into we,
And stove our gallant hull.

"We're goin' down!" the sailors cried
In frightened tones abrupt.
Says the capting: "Ho!
If down we go,
Expenses won't go up!"

The carpenteer he brought some nails,
And got a plank of oak.
"Oh, carpenteer,
See here, see here!"
The cautious capting spoke.

"Since lumber's very high this fall,
Waste not that plank, I pray.
Yon hole fill in
With rags and tin
And clothing cast away."

We brought him rags to mend the leak;
We brought him scraps of wood.
The cap cried: "Nay,
Don't throw away
That stuff so nearly good!

"Go fetch some less expensive rags."
But at these words profound,
The sea went *plunk!*
Our good ship sunk,
And all of us was drowned.

And as I gasped me dying gasp
I thunk: "We owe this dip
To a capting rank,
Who saved a plank,
But couldn't save a ship."



THE LEVELING OF THE WATERS

ASTORY OF THE
THEATRE

By

Adolph Klauber



ILLUSTRATED BY ROBT. A. GRAEF

BRUCE PERRY put down his pen, took a long pull on a very good cigar, and smiled benignantly on Mrs. Perry, who was sitting near aimlessly turning over the pages of the latest monthly magazine. It was apparent that Mr. Perry was well pleased with what he had been writing. On such occasions he always smiled like that. And Mrs. Perry knew the symptoms.

"Another roast, eh, Bruce?" she said, more by way of affirmation than as question.

Bruce Perry nodded.

"Wait a moment," he said, while he hastily scanned his copy for final corrections.

And Mrs. Perry waited; which, indeed, was a habit with her. In fact, it would have surprised Perry, writing there so complacently, had he known that for the first time since their married life began his wife was in a sort of revolutionary mood.

For he was one of those fortunate people who by force of circumstances had been able to make other people do the waiting. Of course, he would have denied the fact that circumstances had anything to do with it. For deep down in Perry's mind was a conviction that he was a self-made man. He had had a rich father, the advantages which riches

bring; and, fortunately for himself, the inclination to appear to advantage in the world. Also, a natural talent for writing. And so, after four years at the best sort of American university for the promulgation of self-esteem, he had returned to his native city, prepared to take up the white man's burden in the office of *The Clarion*, of which his late father had owned the major share of the stock, and on which, after three months' general reporting, his efforts were regarded as so successful that he was put in charge of the dramatic department, assumed to be the only one in which experience and practical knowledge were of no importance.

To offset the lack of these, he could point with pride to an eight months' course of lectures in dramatic literature, which enabled him to discuss the comparative merits of Molière and Shakespeare with absolute conviction, and to convey to rising young dramatists a salutary hint now and then as to the great folly of keeping their eyes on the box office and their minds on their own bread baskets instead of gloriously starving to death in the laudable effort to write masterpieces which nobody would read and no sane manager produce.

Incidentally, having appeared with marked success on several occasions in

the Junior Pie Crusts' dramatic and musical successes, he was in a fair position to advise misguided actors and ambitious actresses of the futility of a technique which took no account of the development of the literary and sociological import of a rôle, but was mainly exerted for the sake of what appeared to be an immediately emotional or comedy effect.

And, like the extremist that he was, his gentler instinct often worked as great an amount of harm. But, whatever his negative qualities, Perry was blessed with an abundant share of positive good humor. Indeed, this quality more than any other accounted for some of the most awful things he put into his articles. Little inclined to regard his own work very seriously, Perry also failed to understand that everybody else in the world wasn't built on the same happy-go-lucky plan. His skin was thick, and he had a notion that elephant's hide had been generously distributed by an all-kind Creator, who knew what His poor mortals might otherwise be called on to endure. He was, in short, the type of man who would not have crushed an ant willingly for fear of the suffering caused; but who, through his own misunderstanding of his calling, was constantly inflicting the sharpest sort of heartache.

Perry was extremely fond of his wife, and she of him; which was natural enough. For she was about on a plane with him mentally.

Her social duties left her little time to interest herself very zealously in her husband's work. She knew that Perry's opinions were always quoted as final when discussions about current plays arose; and she was proud of him. But, somehow, it all looked a little different to her to-night.

Perry himself, however, had never been in a happier frame of mind.

"You see," he said, as he flourished the drying sheet of paper before her eyes, "I've simply made up my mind that from now on there is going to be no quarter. Too many men are writing drivel about plays and acting—and writing it very badly. I can't afford to com-

promise simply because this or that person has spent a fortune in a production, or this or that actress has a mother who will be evicted from her tenement if her daughter loses her job. These people know that nobody is quicker to recognize true merit than I. And I don't see why they ought to complain when the shoe happens to be on the other foot."

Mrs. Perry made an ineffectual attempt to have *Ler* say.

"But, Bruce," she began, "that's exactly what——"

"Wait a minute, dear," he interrupted. "I know what you're going to say. It's what they all say. Why not be as gentle as possible? Say the unpleasant thing pleasantly? Well, I've tried that. But it's no good. Now here, for instance. Listen!"

He picked up his glasses, carefully adjusted them on his nose, leaned a little closer to the table light, and began to read, with emphatic gestures at occasional intervals:

"There is Miss Sadie Montessor, for example, a young woman who for no apparent reason has been intrusted with a leading part in 'The Fortune of a Fool.' Miss Montessor presumably supposes she can act. So does her manager. Both of them evidently believe that she can sing. If that were not true she wouldn't have accepted the position, and he wouldn't have offered it to her. And what is the result? A piece that gave every evidence of being an agreeable contribution to the current season is turned into something very like a funeral. The young woman in question should be put through a course of training in the part of a maid who brings on a card and isn't allowed to speak, much less sing. Or better still, she should seek a position as an old lady's companion or a nursery governess, occupations for which she is far better qualified, no doubt, than that of actress."

"I think," he added, after a moment's pause, "that will take a little of the conceit out of the young woman."

"But why assume the conceit, Bruce? Suppose there's no other occupation open to her?"

"Oh, but there must be," insisted the critic. "I am sure she would be better in any sort of work than she is on the stage. She couldn't possibly be worse."

"Maybe," said his wife; "and then

again maybe not. I know you mean to be honest," she went on quickly, "and you mean to be just. But Bruce, man, what you mean to be is mighty poor solace to a girl who has worked hard, done her best, and then finds herself out on the streets looking for work because you, and some others like you, do not want to stultify yourselves—that's the proper professional phrase, isn't it?"

"I see," answered Perry, "that you, like some other people, have suddenly got the idea into your head that a critic ought to be a sort of side partner to an

pretty clever little man to be able to wield so much influence."

"Oh, nonsense! I won't talk to you if——"

"If I insist on being frank. Well, I have not had much to say on the subject of your work before now, but that was because I didn't quite know. Maybe I believed that you were not influential in that way. I just saw the fun of your cleverness."

"But what's the use of talking about it now? This girl I saw to-night was the limit. Maybe she has a family to support. Well, I think she would make



"It's no use, John," she was saying. "You wouldn't want me to stay on the stage if I married you—and I can't give it up."

employment agency. Well, I am not in that kind of business. Anyway, you are citing an extreme case. Did you ever hear of an actress losing her place on account of a bad notice? I never did. The managers are too well satisfied with their own judgments for that. Oh, yes, the critic is useful to quote from, if his notices are slushy enough; but he is not supposed to know the first thing he is talking about when it comes down to the fine points of singing and acting."

Mrs. Perry smiled vaguely.

"Bruce," she said, "you may talk that way as much as you like, but you cannot deceive me. At this very minute your inner conviction is that you are a

a mighty good washerwoman. There is a chance for you to test your idea of these things. Send for her to-morrow if she loses her job in the theater, and put her to work on your fine shirt waists and best table linen. If she makes a mess of it, you will keep her, of course, because she needs the work. There would be about as much sense in it."

"The cases are different. You aren't employing her, and you don't have to put up with her faults."

"Oh, yes, I do—I had to suffer to-night. Moreover, I think there's a chance to make that show a success if they'll put in another woman."

"But, Bruce, you said they never pay any attention to the roasts—the managers, I mean. So the net result will not be a successful play, but suffering for the girl. And Heaven knows she's had enough."

Perry looked up in surprise. There was now no doubt of his wife's seriousness.

"See here," he said, "I never knew you to take any interest in these people before. Whence all this sudden knowl-



Her breath came fast, her eyes glowed with a new light.

edge? Come, now, little woman, 'fess up. Why, what's the matter?"

For there were tears in Mrs. Perry's eyes, and her lips had gone quite white.

"Oh, Bruce," she sobbed, "I've been a little beast! Here I've let you go on with this horrid work of yours for years, and never once suspected what it might all mean. But to-day my eyes were opened. Oh, do let me tell you!"

He had reached over, and was fondling the little, jeweled hand lying limply on the table.

"Why, of course, honey pet, what is it?"

"Well, you know the Darians—Flor-
ence and Alice?"

"Oh, yes, the altruistic young ladies, who run a settlement or something—patrons of the submerged tenth."

"Very dear, generous, self-sacrificing girls, who are not satisfied to give their tithe in the form of annual donations to organized charities, but who hunt up people really in need of immediate help

who can't afford to wait until they have been reported on by six or eight committees. Well, they were very apologetic, of course; said they didn't expect to influence your criticism, knew you couldn't be approached, and all that sort of thing. But they thought that if you knew the facts you might——"

"Temper the wind to the shorn lamb, eh? Oh, yes, I suppose so. But how about the public, the people who read my notices, and put up their money in consequence?"

"Can't they afford to take a chance once in a while?"

"Some of them, maybe—the two-dollar-seat people, anyhow. But what about the folks who save their pennies to go to a show, and who don't get a chance very often? It's my duty to be charitable to them. I am breaking faith when I allow any consideration except the facts to influence my notices."

"I suppose that's true enough—you know how to fortify yourself, Bruce, dear. And I don't ask you to color your views, as a rule. But there may be a specific case like this one."

"Well, admitting that a lie is sometimes justifiable—mind, I admit it just for argument sake—why shouldn't I tell the truth about this girl?"

"Because, after no end of struggling for any sort of a chance, she somehow got this engagement. The manager liked her work, and, when the prima

donna struck, put her in the principal part at the very last minute. Her old mother had been bedridden for six years. And they were dreadfully poor. And this opportunity seemed like a gift from Heaven. Well, with the hope of a great success singing in her heart, she came home yesterday from rehearsal to find her mother dead. That was twenty-four hours before the first performance. To-morrow morning she will follow her to the grave. She will be absolutely alone in the world. What she has struggled and prayed for all these years won't mean very much, you may be sure, so why add to the agony? Please, just once be kind merely for the sake of kindness."

"I suppose she'll be very much interested in reading the papers under the circumstances," remarked Perry.

"Bruce, it's her life's work. If I were to—but never mind."

She was crying softly. And Perry was human. For a few moments neither of them spoke. Then he took up his pen, and readjusted his glasses.

"You're a dear, little woman," he said; "and I suppose if I were you I would feel the same way about it. Anyhow, I'll try to soften it down a bit. But remember, just this once. Run along now, and sell your papers. I've got to get this in shape to catch the first afternoon extra."

A shabby, black hack, drawn by two scrawny, tired horses, turned out slowly through the tall posts at the entrance of the Cedarlawn Cemetery. Once past the gates, the driver cracked his whip, and the animals broke into a better pace. Inside the hack, a pale young woman with tired eyes lay back on the cushions, and gazed into the gathering darkness.

"It's no use, John," she was saying to the rather handsome boy sitting opposite her, "I know you could take care of me, and, God knows, now that mother's gone, I don't see much real reason to go on working as I have. But I've got to make a success of this thing. And I am going to do it before I quit. You wouldn't want me to stay on the stage

if I married you—and I can't give it up."

"But why?" he urged. "What's the use of it all? And think of the hardship—of the struggle. Maybe if you had been around last night this thing wouldn't have happened. The doctor said that it was exertion that brought the end; that if your mother hadn't crawled out of bed for something when nobody was there to help her, she might have lived for years; and you down at the theater dancing and singing."

"Yes, I know." She was sobbing now. "But mother was just as much interested in having me succeed as I was myself. I guess she knows, too. And when success comes, somehow or other I think she'll have a share in it."

The hack rattled off the smooth roadway onto the granite blocks of the city street.

"And then," the girl continued, "it would never, never do. I'm nobody, and—well, what would your people say? They wouldn't hear of it."

"I don't care what they say. You're everything in the world to me. You're—you—and—"

"Oh, please don't, John, dear! Not now. I can't stand any more to-day."

"Well, tell me I may hope. I only ask for a little promise. Tell me you'll think about giving it all up. That you do care for me just a little."

"I do care," said the girl slowly, and it seemed somewhat sadly. "But this thing in my heart, this craving— Oh, I don't know what it is. But it must be there for something." Then a faint smile played in her eyes. "John, dear," she added, "you've been so good to me. Now, listen. I haven't read any of the papers to-day—I hadn't the heart. But if the notices are bad—mind you, all of them very bad, I'll take it as a sign that I've had my opportunity, and failed. I promise then to think about it."

John Salter sank back into the cushioned seat. The hopefulness of the very young was in his face. At least there had been a concession, and that was something to build upon. A few minutes later the pair made their way into the parlor of the boarding house



"Here, look at this. Bruce Perry wrote that about me once."

from which, a few hours before, the funeral cortège had made. There was a rustle and a bustle, and the form of Mrs. Livermore, the landlady, a blond and buxom person, appeared framed in the half-opened folding doors.

"Oh, Lambie!" she cried. "Oh, you darling Lambie! You must be half starved. Now, darling, it's no use to cry over what can't be helped. And, oh, precious, have you seen Perry in *The Clarion*?"

Perry—*Clarion*—the words were all that were needed to reestablish the mental contact, to bring back the thoughts of that mimic world forced into the background for a time by the intrusion of a real experience. The color flushed into the girl's cheeks, her eyes dilated; she caught up the words almost before they were out of the other's mouth.

"Perry!" she cried. "What does he say? Is it a roast?"

Mrs. Livermore passed over the paper. In a moment the dimly lighted

room, the pale face on the pillow, the cold, white hand lying still on the coverlet, the gloomy pines bending over a new-made grave—all those pictures which had haunted the mind of the young girl only a little while ago—were expunged as if by magic. Her bosom heaved as she read, the breath came fast, her eyes glowed with a new light. It was temperament triumphant.

And John Salter stood expectant, as might one whose turn at the block was rapidly drawing near.

"Well," he said finally, "and what does Perry say?"

"I won't read it all," she answered, "it's too long. You get a copy as you go downtown. But I'm in the headlines; and listen—this is the last paragraph."

She read slowly, emphasizing every adjective, and lingering fondly on every appreciative phrase. This is what it said:

"There is Miss Sadie Montessor, for example, a young woman who for some reason or other has hitherto been kept in a subordinate position while favored stars were being forced into important parts. In *'The Fortune of a Fool'* she is intrusted with a leading rôle, and so admirably does she act it, and so exquisitely does she sing the beautiful lyrics, that the success of the entertainment may be said to have been due almost wholly to her efforts. The young woman in question should be very proud and happy this morning, and it should not be long before her name appears in electric lights over the front door of the theater."

"And what he says goes," ejaculated the landlady. "Oh, by the way, dearie, I've had your things moved into the big front room. I kinda thought you might like to change now, that—"

"Yes, yes." The girl was speaking vaguely, her eyes still fixed on the paragraph she had been reading. Then suddenly looking up: "Oh, must you be going? Well, good night."

For John Salter had walked out into the hall, and was reaching for his hat.

He turned at the words, but there were no eyes to meet his gaze. The first column of the third page of *The Clarion* that moment was her all in all. And as John Salter passed into the street, the last hope had fled.

"I guess this is the finish," he muttered; "no use my trying to buck a fellow like Bruce Perry. Nothing on earth'll make her quit after that. I wonder if she is as good as that."

"Yes, I used to sing in comic opera," said the corpulent person in the faded pink kimono, as she reached over and put a smudge of red on the end of her nose to heighten the comedy effect. "Didn't I never show you my notices?"

She opened a dilapidated trunk, and hauled a well-thumbed scrapbook from its depths.

"Here, look at this. Bruce Perry wrote that about me once; and he was a man nobody could approach. The rest of them—well, they were pikers—just reporters, and what they said didn't go. No; I ain't got none of their notices.

What was the use of keepin' 'em? They didn't count. Mamma had just died, and—well, I guess I got sort of careless after that. And then my pipes went back on me. Married? No. There was a boy once." She reached for a bottle on her dressing shelf, and took a long pull. Then she sighed. "Say, if I'd 'a' listened to him, I'd 'a' never come down to this. Oh, well, now, don't get so sore. We ain't exactly Tetrizzinis, are we? But that notice was the last straw. The footlights for me forever."

A shrill voice down the passage was calling out "Montressor."

"Hurry up, you," it said; "they're ringing in the olio."

The kimono was hastily discarded, and Sadie Montressor, in a short tarlatan skirt, and an exaggerated headdress, topped with a turkey feather, was ready for the first part.

"I say, Bertie," she said, as she passed through the door, "just lay out them pink tights for me so I can jump into 'em quick for my specialty. That's a dear. Gawd, what a life!"




With You

SUMMER has gone from the distant hills,
 Summer that went with you.
 Flecked by the light the roads stretch brown,
 Singing the country and gay the town,
 Under the wild leaves falling down;
 Gold is the autumn's hue.
 But summer has gone from the distant hills,
 Summer that went with you.

Summer has gone from the soul of things,
 Summer that went with you.
 Strong from the north the young wind sings,
 Swift through the air the snowbird wings,
 Hot in the heart the red blood stings;
 Clear is the autumn's blue.
 But summer has gone from the soul of things,
 Summer that went with you.

GERTRUDE BROOKE HAMILTON.



UNCLE WILLIAM'S INDUSTRIOUS YOUNG MAN

By *John D. Swain*

ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

YOU must go to a lazy man if you would seek an example of absolutely untiring industry. I am not discussing this with you; I am *telling* you.

Once get the lazy man to work, and he will do more in an hour than an industrious man in a forenoon; for he longs to complete his task and return to his normal state of tranquillity; whereas to the worker, work is a natural and agreeable form of energy, and he is in no hurry to be done with it. By comparison with the genuinely lazy man, he may be said to dawdle over his task.

My Uncle William Bemis was a prosperous tobacconist in a large town for something over fifty years.

He was a deeply religious man, living in the hope of a blessed immortality, but haunted by secret apprehensions, because a diligent search of the Scriptures failed to reveal to him an indication that there was work to do in heaven. This, I think, was the only spiritual doubt Un-

cle William ever harbored. He left the First Parish Church, of which he had been a member for generations; the church where he was christened, after hearing his lifelong friend and pastor preach a sermon on the Fall of Man, in which he pointed out that it was because of man's sin that he was driven forth from the agreeable idleness of the Garden of Eden, and condemned thereafter to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, thus indicating that hard labor is not to be regarded as a blessing, but a penalty.

Uncle William ate his breakfast every morning about the time when his clerks were addressing their alarm clocks in terms of horrible anathema. He was a bachelor, with no descendants save two nephews, who played golf, rolled their trousers high in perfectly dry weather, and did not know what a sunrise was save from hearsay. I was one of them, which is why I happen to know all about lazy men.

Uncle William was the sworn foe of

half holidays, noon intermissions, eight-hour laws, and vacations. He was a perfectly just man, and never refused to allow his employees the usual concessions prevailing in his town; but he never quite forgave them for wanting them.

Some of his clerks had grown gray in his service, and had helped to make Uncle William a moderately rich man, according to local standards; but among them he had never been able to discover one fitted to take any responsibility from his shoulders when the infirmities of age forbade him to devote as many hours as he would have enjoyed to the actual conduct of his business.

Then, precisely at the psychological moment, a stranger arrived in our town, and applied to him for a position.

His name was Ernest Skinner, and

he had prominent blue eyes, a pronounced double chin, and a waistline seldom associated with youths of his tender years.

Uncle William was the most approachable of men; and, while having no intention of giving employment to Ernest Skinner, he chatted with him pleasantly, and inquired concerning his antecedents, home life, qualifications, et cetera.

Young Skinner had been employed as a clerk in a large grocery in Utica, he learned, and could furnish recommendations. His father was a grammar-school principal, and Ernest himself was a high-school graduate, and mildly interested in history and literature; but good, hard work was his hobby, he told Uncle William; and he had left his old employer for no other reason than that

there was not enough work to suit him, because the store catered to an exclusive patronage, and closed up every Saturday afternoon, and regularly evenings; and time hung heavy on Ernest's hands, he confessed shyly.

Uncle William pricked up his ears at this, and regarded Skinner with much the same interest displayed by a rural holiday maker viewing the inmates of the Bronx Park. Here was a novelty; something unheard of in his long and bitter experience with young men.

He suggested that Skinner take breakfast with him next morning at the little all-night lunch room he frequented; and rather expected to see no more of him. However, when he ar-



Uncle William regarded Skinner with much the same interest displayed by a rural holiday maker viewing the inmates of Bronx Park.



Each morning Ernest Skinner met him at breakfast.

rived promptly at five a. m., Ernest was seated at one of the little wooden tables, with a set-up of knife, fork, spoon, paper napkin, and heavy plate.

He had already finished his morning paper, and greeted my uncle with a cheerful smile. Their conversation, after a few casual comments on the weather, crops, and political situation, drifted naturally along the lines of the growing arrogance of the laboring man, and his general shiftlessness and desire to give just as little honest service as he could for all the money he could possibly get.

On this subject, Ernest was actually more radical than Uncle William, and displayed a fund of statistical information which was delightfully refreshing to him. So absorbed did Uncle William become in his new acquaintance that he forgot, and paid both breakfast checks, and did not recall the circumstance till

afternoon, when he missed a quarter from his pocket change.

To be just to him, he really did not need another clerk, and was unwilling to discharge any of his old employees to make room for Ernest, glad as he would have been to secure a young man with such sterling principles, and so entirely after his own heart.

Each morning Ernest Skinner met him at breakfast, although he now paid his own checks; and, although Uncle William changed his settled habits and came down at a quarter to five, and once or twice even at half-past four, he invariably found Ernest waiting for him, morning paper read and folded neatly by his plate, and looking as fresh and rested as if just out of a sanitarium. So my uncle never was able to discover just how early Ernest really did rise, and this preyed on his mind considerably.

Each day Skinner asked for employment; not tediously, but with the best spirits in the world, usually assuring him that, while he had received offers from various firms in the town, he could not bring himself to relinquish hope of securing employment from a man whose industrious ideals were so entirely his own, and who would, he felt sure, satiate his appetite for hard work. The evenings dragged on him terribly, he confided to my uncle; and the early hours of the day were spoiled for him by the dreary contemplation of the long stretch after supper till his bedtime at half-past eight.

Uncle William, if he ever went out after half-past ten at night, must have done so disguised, as none of his neighbors had ever seen his familiar features downtown at such an hour; and the ingenuous confession of young Skinner won his heart completely. He invited him to spend several evenings at his lodgings, where Ernest smoked his best three-for-five cigars, discoursed delightfully on the tendencies of young men to waste the best years of their lives in frivolous idleness; and pictured the probable future of our country so vividly that Uncle William was secretly glad that he could never live to witness our national downfall.

Of course, the end was inevitable. Uncle William hired Ernest Skinner, expressing his appreciation of his sterling worth by giving him eight, instead of six, dollars a week as a starter; and, according to custom, every one moved up a peg; and Skinner began the day by polishing the brass sign, swabbing down the sidewalk, and washing the windows. Later, when the store was opened, he helped in the shipping room, swept out the office, filled the inkwells, and made himself general-utility man.

Uncle William was accustomed after breakfast to take a stroll over to the store, to see if the iceman had left as large a chunk for the water tank as he had contracted for, and also because he had nothing else to do till the store opened at six, and the first mail came in.

The moderate pleasure of this after-breakfast stroll was now enhanced by

the presence of young Skinner, who was usually just finishing his breakfast as Uncle William began his, and who, by the time the owner arrived at the store, had it shining like a new automobile, and was walking restlessly up and down, consulting his watch, and waiting for the arrival of the clerk who opened up.

This restlessness was not lost upon Uncle William, to whom Ernest often confided his belief that, were the store opened at half-past five, they would take in at least from seventy-five cents to a dollar and a half more, as early risers frequently tried the door; and it pained Ernest exceedingly to see them saunter away with a nickel or dime which he felt should properly repose in Uncle William's cash register. The upshot of the matter was that the keys were delivered over to Skinner, who opened every morning, going inside to attend to such stray customers as happened along.

Once his outside work was finished, Skinner fell on the inside with an almost ferocious joy. The inkwells were not merely filled, but polished; new pens were set in the penholders, all pencils sharpened, the shelves slicked up, all dust and rubbish swept out, and the floors sprinkled; and, by the time business was fairly under way, he was hanging about nervously, beseeching every one, especially Uncle William, to gratify his abnormal appetite for something to do.

Needless to say, he was hated by every employee to the point of murder; and the fact that Uncle William took occasion to hold him up as a model to all the rest, and extolled him at all times, did not tend to soften their wrath any. When he was unable to find anything to do himself, he planned up various ways in which the other clerks could increase their efficiency. He installed a time machine, contrived a laborious mail-order system, composed numberless circulars, with which he flooded their country customers, and which kept the nerves of the one stenographer and the bookkeeper at high tension, added one or two books and

journals to their office system, devised various checks and attestations, which compelled every one to do about twice as much writing as formerly, in order to eliminate errors, and kept the entire establishment in a state of terrific uproar.

The ultimate result, I always believed, would be the death of Ernest Skinner, whose mutilated body would have proved a nine days' wonder in local police circles; but, as a matter of fact, in exactly six months, during which time Uncle William had become a taciturn man, having literally exhausted his vocabulary singing the virtues of his new clerk, Skinner was offered outright a half interest in Uncle William's business, without having to pay in one cent of capital, he to have active supervision of the business, while my uncle retained charge of its finances.

No sooner were the papers drawn up than Uncle William departed to visit the home of his boyhood in Illinois, to renew old-time acquaintances, and take the first rest he had allowed himself since he started hoeing corn at eight years of age.

It was then that we, his nephews, became acquainted with Ernest Skinner. Not that we had been able to avoid him entirely before, for, of course, Uncle William had not failed to bring him around to the house, and urge him upon us as a model young man; and we hated him cordially.

If I have succeeded at all in depicting Ernest Skinner as he appeared to us, you will, in a measure, understand the petrified surprise with which my brother and myself read a short note from him asking us to be so good, if we were personally inclined to do so, as to propose his name for our little country club. We declared, in chorus to each other, that never, never should he set foot in that

little oasis could we prevent it; but common decency, combined, I suspect, with a large dash of curiosity, caused us to call upon him to talk the matter over, and learn why on earth he desired to join, and what horrible changes he purposed working in our little coterie of idlers, treading a quite innocuous but pleasant primrose path of their own.

The sight of his quarters was even more disturbing to our mental concept of Ernest Skinner than his note had been. He received us easily and affably in a small room adjoining his sleeping quarters, a room containing a few shelves of excellent books, hung

with a number of good sporting prints and some curious old theatrical playbills, and furnished unostentatiously, with just enough comfortable chairs and pipe-strewn tables to indicate the tastes of a genial bachelor of some leisure.



Skinner began the day by polishing the brass sign, and washing the windows.

His somewhat reduced figure was clad in a dark smoking jacket, and he genially waved us to a little oak-and-copper buffet, whereon were set Scotch



Skinner laughed heartily, and admitted freely that he had always detested work in every form.

and rye, and a few bottles of ale reposing frostily in a tiny tank of chipped ice, urging us to help ourselves.

He frankly apologized for asking a favor of us, admitting that he had been so very busy since his arrival that he had lacked the time to cultivate the right sort of people—the sort to whom he had been accustomed; assured us that, while he was not an athlete, he did not lack a certain skill in swinging a golf driver, and that he was not entirely rusty in his tennis; and gayly placed himself entirely in our hands, thanking us in advance for anything we might be so good as to do for him.

We left after a couple of pleasant hours, in which we saw a new Skinner, a fellow of whimsical fancies, broadened by some little travel and a great deal of acute observation, and giving us both the impression that he was positively starving for companionship.

He was elected to the country club in less than the month customarily re-

quired, and became a leader from the start. He made our golf team easily, and later was chairman of the entertainment committee, during which period our reputation for hospitality to visiting clubs increased about one hundred and fifty per cent. He bought a light runabout, and was to be seen on nearly every pleasant afternoon spinning away with some one or other of our local belles.

During this time, I can only conjecture what were the thoughts of his fellow clerks; but I recall the grim and terse comment of old Higgins, the bookkeeper, when one day I met him at the bank, and asked him casually how everything was running at the store.

"Wait till the old man gets back!" he said, and his mouth closed like an iron hinge.

And in due season my Uncle William did get back, and awful was his rage. Ernest Skinner still wandered into the store in the forenoon, and spent about

half his evenings there; but he was seldom seen in the afternoon at all.

Matters were running smooth enough, to be sure, and a very quiet, capable young man, "a friend of mine," Skinner said, had been engaged at a liberal salary to act as general manager; but what rankled in Uncle William's breast was the thought that he had been grossly hoodwinked; betrayed, deceived, made a laughingstock of; and, what was worst of all, was the inexorable fact that Ernest Skinner was a partner, and that it is terrible hard to get rid of partners who do not want to be got rid of, and are quite satisfied with the state of affairs.

I was present at some of their interviews, during which Skinner displayed the utmost good nature, laughed heartily at Uncle William's bitter references to his former opinions concerning work, admitted freely that he had always detested work in every form; but that it had become necessary for him to establish himself in life, and have something definite in the way of prospects; and that, in order to bring this about, he had been obliged to lay aside his prejudices and work real hard for six months; but that now it was all over, he never, never again would be found up so early in the morning, unless he stayed up all night, and that the real genius of modern finance was revealed by one's ability to pick out the right sort of man to do one's work; and that Rockefeller himself could never have made one hundred thousand dollars had he tried to do all the work himself, instead of possessing the genius for getting the work out of some one else.

What could Uncle William do? Ernest had no money, and cheerfully refused to sell; and urged Uncle William to remember that he was getting to be an old man, and that he better kick up his heels and enjoy himself while he could, and guaranteed that the annual inventory would show a big profit over the preceding year. And it did, too; but Uncle William was not to be consoled.

It was gall and wormwood to him to feel that he was a half partner with a man who held to ideals of life which he detested. Who played golf, owned a runabout, slept late of mornings, and attended baseball games.

The upshot of it was that the old gentleman sold out to Ernest Skinner, who borrowed the money without difficulty on the showing of the firm's books; and soon after Uncle William went back to Illinois, and died; and I secretly fear that his life was shortened many years by his experience. Skinner, however, evinced no remorse, and often assured us that had the old gentleman been willing to leave his capital in the business, he could have doubled it for him, without the necessity of his lifting a finger save to sign checks. But that would have been little compensation to Uncle William, I think, with idleness imposed as a condition.

We were his heirs, my brother and I; but he always held that we were guilty of debauching Ernest Skinner, and turning him from the path of industry by inveigling him into our country club; and he left his snug fortune so impregnably intrenched behind guardians, trustees, and all the legal devices his ingenious mind contrived, that it was easier to go out and earn some more than to unravel all the red tape and get at any of our inheritance. And, as a result, we went to work for Ernest Skinner, buying out an interest as fast as we could pry off a few thousands from Uncle William's bequest.

Skinner was very liberal, and never expected us to work very hard, and allowed his clerks more holidays and longer vacations than any concern in town; and he is our richest inhabitant to-day, and enjoys life to the full, and is only depressed on the occasions when he recalls how terribly hard he had to work for six months when he was a young man.

It has given him, he earnestly assures every one, a deep sympathy for the laboring classes.





The Serpent in the House

By Wallace Irwin

ILLUSTRATED BY HY. MAYER

THE Entertainment Committee of the San Pablo Anti-Suffrage League, gathered in the pergola of Mrs. Watts-Miller's Italian house, stood in a terrified circle around a box plainly marked "McCann's Baking Powder."

"Ugh!" said Mrs. Watts-Miller and her daughter, Ursula.

"Ugh!" said Aunt Florence, because she realized that "Ugh!" was the very thing for a womanly woman to say upon beholding a four-foot serpent coiling in torpid misery within the narrow confines of a baking-powder box.

Justine Rogers, the fourth and fairest of the group, uttered no guttural syllables of repulsion. On the contrary, her face wore an expression of compassionate interest as she quietly

lifted a slat from the box, passed her gloved hand inside, and lightly stroked the intricate pattern that adorned the scaly hide.

"Poor Thaddeus!" she meditated.

"Oh! For Heaven's sake, Justine!" shrieked three soprano throats, while three pairs of hands drew her hastily away from the crate.

"Justine!" gasped her Aunt Florence. "Don't you realize that all snakes are poisonous—or something?"

Justine laughed like a blond and frivolous Psyche.

"Rubbish!" she said. "That snake wouldn't bite anybody. We had that kind in our zoölogy course—he's a common gopher snake. That's an awfully small box for such a large snake," she added.

Aunt Florence said nothing, but she was obviously horrified at her niece. Organizer of the local Anti-suffrage League, she was a strenuous advocate of the "womanly woman." It was for the purpose of establishing once for all woman's unarguable place—the home—that she had arranged the great Anti-suffrage Fair, to be held in the Gayety Theater on the following day.

"That horrid thing," said Mrs. Watts-Miller, glancing shudderingly toward the snake box, "is one of Ursula's ideas. He's going to be one of the exhibits in the Chamber of Horrors."

"We propose showing him in a cage," said Ursula, somewhat tartly. "I've painted this placard to go on him."

Ursula showed a large card, painted in red, as follows:

**WOMEN! AVOID THE SERPENT
IN THE HOUSE**

The Poison Viper of Unfeminine Ideas!!

Thaddeus, the snake, stirred restlessly in his sleep.



A vision of Billy as a male suffragette—one of the comic-weekly sort who wear side whiskers, and shout "Votes for Women!" at the command of a basso wife.

"Yes," said Ursula, who possessed the pale profile of a Botticelli saint, "Mr. Rance, the grocer, caught him."

"He looks like Thaddeus Rance," said Justine. "Something about his eyes and forehead that reminds me of Mr. Rance—that's why I thought of calling him Thaddeus, of course."

"I planned the exhibit," said Ursula proudly. "We wanted something striking to show that emancipation, so called, is a disgusting idea, to be avoided by every wholesome-minded woman—just like playing with a deadly reptile."

"But Thaddeus isn't a deadly reptile," objected Justine.

"He's been in the stable three days, and I've scarcely slept a wink," said Mrs. Watts-Miller nervously.

"What do you feed him?" asked Justine, always kind to animals.

"He's so on my nerves!" said Mrs. Watts-Miller, ignoring the question. "I think, Ursula, that Mr. Rance had better take him back."

"But, mother," cried the Botticelli profile, "Mr. Rance says he won't keep him any longer at the store."

"Well," said Mrs. Watts-Miller, in a tone of finality, "if he stays here another night I shall die. He'll have to be taken care of or disposed of—in some other way."

Her glance traveled murderously toward the baking-powder box.

"Let me keep him," spoke up Justine out of the silence.

"You? Where, please?" demanded Aunt Florence, in her tone of splendor. "Why, in our—in your house," said Justine.

"Justine, I thought you were a womanly woman. How can you think of such things?" demanded Aunt Florence,

as she departed, in company with Mrs. Watts-Miller. The two elder ladies were going to make calls.

"I think I know what to do with him," said Justine to Ursula, as the two, left alone, stood mournfully over the prison house of Thaddeus.

The frivolous Psyche leaned toward the Botticelli saint, and breathed a few words in her ear.

"You don't mean——"

"Yes; but be careful," said Justine. "Kato, the Jap, can bring it around after dark—my window's the first one over the west veranda."

"You sweet, brave thing!" cried Ursula. "Wouldn't it make your aunt wild if she knew!"

But Justine merely smiled as she kissed her friend good-by.

William K. Douglas, Insurgent Republican, aged twenty-seven, saw Justine coming down the palm-lined California Avenue, and approached her at a sharp angle of coincidence. He was a tall, rangy youth, with a passion for debate. His love affair with Justine had been in the nature of a sporting event, fraught with uncertainties, and founded on difference of opinion.

"Justine," said William K., rather severely, as he drew his Panama from his noble Highland brow, "I thought you said you'd be at the Stillmans this afternoon. I've been there two hours. Believe me, they're a dead lot!"

"Don't be so blue about it, Billy," laughed Justine. "Douglas, Douglas, slender and blue." Then, seeing his thunderous look, she modified her tone: "I've been at the Watts-Millers, arranging for the Anti-suffrage Fair."

This added visibly to his gloom. William K. Douglas strode along, saying nothing.

"It's going to be very elaborate," resumed Justine. "We're going to have an auction sale, and an exhibition of dolls——"

"It'll be an exhibition of dolls, all right," growled William K. "I never saw an anti demonstration that wasn't."

"You're sympathetic, aren't you?" exclaimed Justine, her cheeks beginning to redden.

"You know why I'm not," he said. "I don't like standpatters of either sex."

"Thinking of choosing some lady La Follette?" inquired Justine, with asperity.

"Nonsense!" he replied. "The idea that suffragettes are masculine is older than the mother-in-law joke—and just about as false. You get such notions from your Aunt Florence. It doesn't make a woman less beautiful to think about something once in a while."

"Billy," said Justine, with exaggerated sweetness, "the Antis' Fair begins to-morrow. Ursula and I will have the chamber of horrors booth. Won't you come, for my sake?"

"Never!" replied the young statesman. "You know, Justine, how I feel about you. But you're not asking me in good faith. You want to get me there to josh my principles, that's all."

"I can be just as independent as you can," said Justine, rather shrilly.

"The whole thing's a silly idea," he resumed. "The negative protest of a lot of women who want—what? The harem privilege of shrieking at a mouse, or fainting away at the sight of a garter snake."

Justine thought of Thaddeus.

"I'm sorry you're so hard to please," she said, in tones of ice. "I shan't insist upon your meeting me at the Antis' Fair—or anywhere else—in the future."

A small, blue-clad figure glided majestically down the avenue, while a tall young man in brown stood in the shade of a sheltering palm, and looked after her reflectively.

Justine, after being as unsocial as possible at dinner, locked herself in her room. Aunt Florence surmised that her niece and Billy had been plunged in another political disagreement. Aside from his advanced theories, she approved of William K. Douglas. His father had been lucky in real estate, and Billy was fast becoming a Grand Young Man in California politics. Aunt Florence had a theoretical admiration for "masterful men."

Meanwhile Justine, having clad herself in a wrapper of frivolous outline,



Almost immediately Thaddeus paused, stood up on his tail and faced her.

was preparing to resign herself comfortably to an evening of desolation. She tried to summon to her mind a scornful vision of Billy as a male suffragette—one of the comic-weekly sort who wear side whiskers, and shout "Votes for Women!" at the command of a basso wife. Depressed by these reflections, she was about to console herself with tears, when she was interrupted by a noise as of a pebble falling lightly on her windowpane. Looking out, she saw, on the moonlit lawn below, a short, squat figure standing beside a box. She opened the window, and crawled onto the veranda.

"Is that you, Kato?" she called softly.

"Please, I do!" answered a high voice. "I throw rope, you pull snake."

Kato tossed the end of a clothesline up to her, and Justine began pulling Thaddeus' box up slowly, hand over hand. Softly she swung the crate into her room.

The box sat in the middle of the carpet, under the full glare of the electric

light. There was a rough, dragging sound inside. Slowly a loose slat began to raise, and Thaddeus poked his horny head out into the upper air. He darted his tongue out foolishly two or three hundred times, and looked at the girl with an expression that was not spiteful, but rather full of mild reproach.

Now, there are people—old Doctor Darwin notwithstanding—who are neither morbid nor abnormal in other regards, yet can associate with serpents on terms of mutual trust. Justine was one of these. She did not love snakes particularly, but the snake dread was zero in her psychology. And as Thaddeus unlooped himself languidly from the box to the floor, she became aware that he was not a bad sort, as snakes go.

Maneuvering himself in a series of wonderful geometric curves, Thaddeus began making a grand tour of the room. He moved slowly and methodically, eyeing everything closely, like a near-sighted old gentleman looking over an apartment with a view to renting. He

investigated the matter of window curtains and upholstery, tested the varnish on the chairs with critical tongue, swayed gayly in front of a radiator several times, and finally, crawling up the post of a rocking chair, he coiled around an ornamental knob, boa-constrictor fashion. Thus poised, he surveyed the depths of a porcelain wash stand with calculating eye. Slowly uncoiling himself, he slipped into the bowl, and earnestly endeavored to crawl down the waste pipe.

Justine, watching these maneuvers, marked a disconcerting trait in Thaddeus' character. A stubborn desire to crawl down something seemed to have possessed the sinuous length of his saurian soul. For that was Thaddeus' ambition and destiny. He looked for holes naturally, just as a philosopher looks for truth, or a poet for spring. For holes, to him, meant all that life held dear—cool rambles under the roots of pepper fruits, with the promise of rich gopher meat at the other end.

Justine reflected apprehensively on Thaddeus' subway habits. Suppose he *should* find an exit through the wall, and drop in on Aunt Florence! The thought filled the girl's mind with terror. Her aunt, always a benevolent tyrant, had forbidden Thaddeus the house. If she knew the truth, she would surely disinherit her niece, who depended on Aunt Florence for her home, her college education—everything.

Examining the room for possible outlets, Justine found, to her horror, that a brick was gone from the back of the little fireplace near the window. This was an old-fashioned house, and the flue, seldom needed in that southern climate, had long awaited repairs. If Thaddeus ever got through that hole—well, the flue led to the fireplace in the dining room below.

Hastily Justine stuffed the open chink with a newspaper. Thaddeus was already making for the fireplace as the next stop in his interesting excursion. He was obviously hungry. What could she offer him to eat? Gophers, perhaps. But she couldn't catch a gopher

at this time of night; and she couldn't think of such a cruelty, under any circumstances. Then her eye rested upon a glass of milk which Hop Sing, the servant, always left on her bureau in the evening. Pouring some of the milk in a pin tray, she headed off Thaddeus in his restless wanderings, and held the repast before his beady eyes. Without hesitation, Thaddeus plunged his nose into the fluid, and sipped gratefully. He almost seemed to purr. As he drank, the girl leaned lightly, and stroked the handsome brown mottles on his back.

But just as soon as the repast was finished, Thaddeus again began his monotonous excursion of the room. His narrow brain was apparently still centered upon the ideal hole. He was a holomaniac. If only she could get his mind off the subject, perhaps she could induce him to lie still and slumber.

"What do snakes like, besides food?" she kept asking herself, riddle-wise. Ah, music! There came to her mind visions of Indian fakirs blowing their magic pipes in the faces of trance-bound cobras. There was her old mandolin in the corner; she could only pick out a few tunes, but maybe Thaddeus wasn't particular.

Desperately she pulled the instrument from its case, tuned it clumsily, and began picking it with a hairpin. Always an indifferent performer, she made poor work of "Suwanee River" and "The Rosary." Thaddeus, still crawling, paid absolutely no attention. What was a good snake tune, anyhow? Inspirationally she thought of the wiggly Oriental melody made famous at the Chicago Fair as "The Streets of Cairo." She began picking it out on the E string. Almost immediately Thaddeus paused, stood up on his tail, and faced her. His long neck and protracted waist moved to the rhythm of the discordant melody. His head swayed metrically from side to side. Evidently she had struck upon the serpents' national air.

She had never seen the Streets of Cairo, On the Midway she had never strayed, whanged the mandolin. When she

played, he danced; when she paused, Thaddeus, at once relaxed, began to crawl away, indifferent. Again she struck up the Moslem strain. Again the snake poised on his tail, turned toward her, and resumed his desert rigadoun. The game seized Justine with its wild fascination. She experimented. She played "Violets" and "Fair Harvard" to Thaddeus' obvious disgust. But at the very first notes of "The Streets of Cairo" Thaddeus again became charmed. He put upon himself all the aristocratic graces of his venomous cousins of the Far East. He coquetted with the acrid melody. He forgot the sordid commonplaces of his gopher-hunting career. "She had never seen the Streets of Cairo," snarled the mandolin.

There came a sharp knock at the door. Justine sprang to her feet. With one hand, she threw the mandolin on a couch, with the other she seized the mild Thaddeus by his tail, and popped him into a clothes closet. She kicked the baking-powder box under the bed, and locked the closet. The knock came again, clearer, nearer, deadlier than before. She opened the door, and faced her Aunt Florence, who stood, pale in her dressing sack, her hair discreetly braided for the night.

"Justine, *whatever* has happened?" inquired the older woman, coming into the room.

"I don't know, Aunt—I—" began the frightened Justine.

The delicacy of the situation overcame her. She suppressed a laugh, and found herself crying.

"I noticed you were queer at dinner," said Aunt Florence. "There, there—don't cry," she added gently. "I know you've had a quarrel with Billy—hush!"

"It's all over between us!" wailed Justine, now sobbing in her aunt's arms.

Her emotions were divided between regret for her quarrel and relief that the topic had come up just now to save the situation.

"Whenever I think of him I'm s-s-s-so miserable!"

"Is that any reason why you should

sit alone in your room playing 'The Streets of Cairo' on a rusty mandolin?" inquired Aunt Florence severely.

Justine threw herself on the bed, and buried her face in her pillow. Aunt Florence was suspicious.

At that moment, Thaddeus began stirring noisily among the hatboxes in the closet.

"What's that?" cried Aunt Florence. "Those rats are all over the house," she added, trying the resisting door.

Justine began a fresh spasm of weeping.

"I'll ne-he-hever see him again!" she wailed.

"Be sensible, child," cooed Aunt Florence. "You know, I've patched things up for you."

"What do you mean?" asked Justine, rising tearfully.

"I knew it was just another silly quarrel between you two children, so I telephoned to Billy, and asked him to come over to luncheon to-morrow and go with us to the fair."

"Is he coming?" asked Justine, forgetting herself.

"He's glad enough to come," consoled Aunt Florence.

"Oh, *why* did you interfere?" asked Justine, wide-eyed. "I'll utterly refuse to see him."

"Oh, you'll feel better about it in the morning," said the elder woman. "I've asked Mrs. Beveridge—she's coming to luncheon, too."

"I thought Mrs. Beveridge wasn't well enough to go out," said Justine.

"She really isn't," agreed Aunt Florence. "Her heart is terribly weak, and she has some sort of nervous complication so that she can't stand excitement. Poor Mrs. Beveridge! At the slightest shock she goes off into a sort of trance, and turns completely blue. She is such a womanly woman," added Aunt Florence consolingly.

"We must be very careful of her nerves," said Justine, as her aunt departed.

As soon as she was alone, Justine carefully locked the door, and opened Thaddeus' prison. The snake, tired of travel, had settled in an open hatbox,



"I'll fix him!" said Billy courageously, advancing with his pocketknife.

coiled himself comfortably around her best plumes, and resigned himself to dreams. The girl rather resented this invasion of her millinery. However, she unwrapped Thaddeus carefully, and put him in his baking-powder prison, where she bent a nail over the loose slat, and left him for the night.

Next morning Justine had breakfast in her room. She shared her glass of milk impartially with Thaddeus, and popped him hastily into strange prisons whenever her aunt or a servant invaded her room. The milk diet seemed to be getting at the snake gradually; he showed a growing tendency to lie at full length, and sink away into the land of torpor.

At half-past eleven the girl arose, locked the door, and laid Thaddeus—now perfectly indifferent—on a newspaper in the middle of the room. The Watts-Millers' Jap would call for the snake box at two, and take the monster over to the chamber of horrors. Justine was glad it would be so soon. She was getting rather tired of Thaddeus.

8

As the hour hand of the clock crept on toward twelve, she began the selection of a gown especially harmonious with the tints of her eyes and hair. Would she go down to lunch when Billy Douglas came? She rather thought she would. As she dressed her hair, she glanced round now and then at the moveless snake, now stretched like an illustration across the front page of a yellow journal.

The clock struck one. Justine was now perfectly attired—a Psyche in floating blue. A carriage came up the drive outside, and, glancing out, she saw the unwieldy bulk of Mrs. Beveridge as that nervous person slowly issued forth. Then came steps along the gravel. A tall, earnest young man in brown swung into view, and approached the house. Justine's heart beat wildly—how pale he looked!

She was distracted from her reverie by the sound of a scaly tail whisking the newspaper on the floor, and looked round just in time to see the snake, aroused from his torpor by some sudden inspiration, making straight for the

hole in the fireplace. Panic-stricken, she thought of the irritable Aunt Florence, and Mrs. Beveridge's chameleon habit of turning blue at any sudden shock. She plunged after Thaddeus, but her fingers missed his quick-flying tail, and, like a flash, that remarkable serpent's flat head struck away the paper that chinked the hole. Nearly a yard of him disappeared instantly into the flue. But ere he could withdraw his entire ego, Justine, with one desperate clutch, seized the end of his tail with both her hands, and gave a mighty tug. Thaddeus was immovable. He had evidently crooked the tendrils of his being around some uneven surface inside the chimney, to which he held fast with a supersaurian strength.

What could Justine do? To call to her aunt, and reveal the situation, was worse than suicidal. To let Thaddeus tumble down the flue into the dining room below would result in a scene which would surely bring indigo death to the nervous Mrs. Beveridge. A thousand useless plans passed through the girl's mind as she held on with all her might, Thaddeus gaining an inch now and then by some cunning trick of jujitsu.

There came a rap at the door.

"Yes?" said Justine, in a stifled voice.

"Justine," said Aunt Florence tensely, outside, "aren't you coming down?"

"No," said Justine, speaking coldly, because her whole force was concentrated on Thaddeus' tail.

"For mercy's sake!" whispered Aunt Florence. "Billy is here, and—why, it's ridiculous!"

"I won't come!" said Justine. "I told you I wouldn't." Thaddeus gained another inch as she spoke. "I won't see him."

"Well, of all the foolish whims!" snorted Aunt Florence, as she whisked away.

Justine ground her teeth, and gave her serpentine adversary a spiteful twist. The ridiculous snake had ruined everything. Under the strained circumstances, Billy would never forgive her for not coming down. That she

realized. Tears came to her eyes. Her fingers were getting fearfully tired.

She and Thaddeus were now at a deadlock. What could she do to turn the serpent from his hole-bound purpose? Her nerves were straining to the breaking point. A curious rhythm, barbaric and disagreeable, kept pulsing through her temples—aha! "The Streets of Cairo!" The tune that snakes love better than food! She saw her mandolin in a far corner of the room. With both hands engaged, she pined for Paladino's fabled power to make musical instruments fly through the air, played by invisible fingers.

Battling with an increasing impulse to shriek or faint, she listened. She could hear Billy's voice in the hallway downstairs. What was the matter? Was he going home, enraged at her absence? The front door closed with a sharp report. Footsteps ground along the gravel below. Justine, still gripping the sinuous folds, stretched as far as she could, and looked out of the window. Young Douglas was jamming his hat on his head, and stamping down the path.

"Billy!" called Justine.

The young man paused, and looked around.

"Billy—I'm here—at the window over the veranda—crawl up the post—come quick!" gasped Justine, as she again settled on her knees, and held on.

In a moment she heard heavy shoes knocking along the veranda ornaments. A Panama hat obscured the light outside, and Billy scrambled into the room.

"Billy," hissed Justine, "bring me my mandolin—quick!"

"What the deuce?" said William K. Douglas. "What *have* you got there?"

"Thaddeus—a snake," said Justine simply.

"A snake?"

Billy cringed away involuntarily.

"You don't mean to say you're afraid!" Justine had still strength enough to say. "I know how you despise women who *faint* at mice and garter snakes!"

"I'll fix him!" said Billy courage-

ously, advancing with an open pocket-knife.

"No, no!" pleaded Justine. "Don't murder the poor thing—besides, the rest of him would crawl down into the dining room, even if you did."

"I don't know what to do," admitted William K. Douglas, probably for the first time in his political career.

"Didn't I tell you to get me that mandolin?" inquired Justine. Billy brought the instrument, and laid it at her feet. "Can you play 'The Streets of Cairo'?" she asked.

"N-no, I don't play," said the man, looking carefully into her eyes, to see if the experience had wrecked her reason.

"Very well," said Justine. "Then you'll have to hold onto Thaddeus while I play."

"Will that be—er—necessary?" asked William K. Douglas, who had felt a repulsion for snakes ever since his earliest childhood.

"Perhaps not," said Justine, with fine irony. "Perhaps I can hold the snake with both hands, and play the mandolin with my nose. Now, hurry!"

Her voice was growing weaker.

Douglas looked once around the room, his eyes despairing. Then he took a towel from the wash stand, wrapped it carefully around his hands, and, thus secure, laid hold of the visible portion of Thaddeus' horrid anatomy. Justine, meanwhile, took the mandolin, and, without so much as tuning up, drew a hairpin from her hair, and began to whang the strings. "She had never seen the Streets of Cairo," admitted the tortured chords. An immediate effect was noticeable in the length of snake protruding from the bricks. It wriggled, it became less taut, and Thaddeus, with a mighty twist of jungle joy, doubled in his course, and hurled himself at the feet of Justine, where he swayed and pirouetted to the tum-tum-tum of the serpents' national air.

Then Justine dropped her mandolin, and fell into the arms of her lover.

"Dearest, how—why—what?" inquired William K., as soon as she could speak.

"It's Ursula's fool exhibit," began Justine.

"For her fool fair," added Billy. "But, Justine—I'll take you there if you want me to. I love you too well to refuse you anything. Yes, you can even be an anti-suffragist if you like."

"I don't want to be—now," Justine whispered in his ear. "Billy, dear, I think I'm just as well qualified to vote as you are!"

"We'll be married next week," eagerly spoke the executive William K. Douglas. "Now, let's tell Aunt Florence. I'll shinny down the veranda post, while you run down the stairway. We'll meet in the dining room, and announce our engagement."

Fifteen seconds later an excited young couple met before the stately table, where Aunt Florence was dining alone.

"You *have* made a mess of it," began that great lady severely. "Your untimely quarrel so upset Mrs. Beveridge that she almost had an attack, and was taken home."

"We're engaged!" said Billy abruptly.

"We're going to be married next week!" panted Justine.

"Engaged—to be married?" exclaimed Aunt Florence. "Why, you were deadly enemies ten minutes ago. What supernatural power *could* have brought you together like that?"

As if in answer to Aunt Florence's question, there came a curious rustle and clatter in the fireplace. And, with prodigious squirming, a four-foot gopher snake fell triumphantly into the room, thrust out its tongue three or four hundred times at the assembled company, and darted away through an open door.





MISS. SMALLPIECE *and the* OCCULT

By
Edith Summers Updegraff

ILLUSTRATED BY G. C. PUGSLEY

"I'd rather ha'e a young man
Wi' an apple in 'is hand,
Than ony dodderin' auld man
Wi' houses an' wi' land."

SO caroled Mrs. O'Malley, our camp cook, as she deftly rolled and rerolled the paste for her inimitable raspberry pie. Basking in the warm blue-and-gold leisure of the perfect July morning, I lounged lazily across the sill of the open kitchen window, and watched her swift, capable manipulations of the dough, with the luxurious pleasure of indolence contemplating activity.

"Did you know that the anti-suffragists were going to hold a meeting in the clubhouse to-night?" I inquired, by way of making conversation.

"Antis or no antis, it's alike to me," returned Mrs. O'Malley, in her rich, velvety, north of Ireland brogue, as she skillfully scalloped the edge of a pie with her floury thumb and forefinger. "People wi' notions is enough on a counthryside. I've a mistrust of ivery mother's son of thim afther livin' wi' Miss Smallpiece."

"Who was Miss Smallpiece?" I inquired, anxious to start the flow of Mrs. O'Malley's always interesting reminiscences.

"Who was Miss Smallpiece, ye're

afther askin'? Well, ma'am, she was the queerest I iver lit eyes on; though wheriver y're minded to go in Americky ye'll find them that's queer, an' some that's queer past all comprehendin'. But she went past everythin', that there one."

"How was she queer?" I put in.

"Well, ma'am, she was notional—wi' notions that set strange on her, bein' that she was so tight an' stingy. If she'd 'a' been reared up i' the north o' Ireland, there'd 'a' been some sense to her. She'd 'a' been close—jist plain close an' miserly; an' the neighbors 'u'd of knew it, an' ticketed her for what she was. But here in Americky, where iverybody's a-thryin' to seem what they ain't, an' a-sthrivin' like mad to be somethin' they can't niver arrive at becomin', she passed for a philanthropist, as they call thim, an', havin' 'advanced' views, whatever them same views may be. Nobody seems to know; leastways me.

"How she come by her notions there's little tellin'. She belonged to lots o' clubs, an' societies, an' the like; an' I suppose she got thim out o' thim clubs an' societies, an' the magazines an' newspapers she took. She was continually a-hearin' or a-readin' about some new thing, an' a-thryin' it.

"It begun wi' her dickerin' wi' reme-

dies. Not that she was enjoyin' poor health; leastways, not so far as a human eye could see. She was full-fleshed, an' high-colored, an' as hearty a eater, for a woman o' five an' forty—an' that's the age whin good vittles is enjoyed—as you'd find on this side o' the ocean; or t'other side, either, for that matter. But she kept imaginin' she had ailments, an' that she ought to have her constitution builded up. I'm thinkin' that in the days whin patent medicines was ragin' around like roarin' lions, she must of took 'em down like water. But them times, as you an' me knows, is gone by, an' there's newer-fangled ways o' dick-erin' wi' the body the Lord gave ye.

"She had a thry at what they call the wather cure, dhrinkin' whole gallons o' 't between meals, an' on risin' an' goin' to her bed, till you'd a thought her insides would 'a' floated clean away. Then she got holt o' the fresh air an' exercise cure, an' used to sleep out on a corner o' the piazz, an' spend her days walkin' up an' down for exercise, an' swingin' dumb-bells, an' thryin' to reach an' touch her toes wi'out bendin' her knees, which she was by far too fleshy an' middle-aged to iver git to do.

"After that she come onto a new way of eatin' called Fletcherism, which was a real joy to 'er. As I was afther tellin' ye a while back, although she had so many newfangled notions, she was most awful mean an' close wi' her money. She hated for to have anybody know it, howsomever, for it was meat an' dhrink to her to be well thought of. So, when ladies would come around collectin' for the church bazaar, or the cat-an'-dog hospital, or the fund for providin' the heathen wi' knitted neckties, she'd look on the list an' see what the others had giv', an' then she'd give the same—or maybe a wee bit more; an' afterwar'd thry to make it up by gettin' me to peel the potatoes thinner an' be more sparin' wi' the coal i' the kitchen range, which Lord knows she wouldn't go to the expense o' havin' the hole i' the fire box fixed, an' it never would bake worth a whistle.

"Well, as I was afther sayin', Fletcherism suited her fine. It showed how

you could live on next to nothin' if you only chawed it long enough. She took to chawin' up bits o' dhray bread an' hard, cold, forbiddin' prunes for her meals, an' givin' me orders not to do no more cookin' nor buy no more meat; till, if it hadn't 'a' been for the Cameron's cook next door, that handed me a bite over the fence 'most every evenin' when we'd be standin' there havin' the civil yarn, what wi' me ownin' only store teeth that couldn't chaw much an' needin' a bit o' meat every day, like all decent people, I'd of been clean starved to death, providin' I hadn't took another place, which I shure would of done if Miss Virginia hadn't come.

"It was when Miss Smallpiece was beginnin' to ease up a little on Fletcherism an' vegetarianism, an' was gettin' interested in New Thought an' Mental Healin', that her stepiece, Miss Virginia, came to live wi' her. I didn't know jist how things was whin she come, but I found out as time went on. The pore little thing was a orphan; an' it seems when her father died he left her an' her money, which was considerable, in care of Miss Smallpiece, as was her only livin' relative. She'd been goin' to school in a place called Bryn Mawr, where her father'd put her. But now she was all through wi' that, an' had a extra fine eddication, so they said; an' she was comin' back to Miss Smallpiece's 'cause there wasn't no other place for her to go.

"She hadn't been i' the house two days afore the whole feel o' the place was changed. She was that pretty, an' bright, an' active—allus singin', an' hummin' around, an' makin' the rooms seem like the sun was shinin' into thim when it wasn't. An' she hadn't been there two weeks afore young Mr. Horace Cameron, that lived next door, was payin' her attentions that was onmistakable to my mind; an' Mr. Algernon Moggs, the gentleman that had been interestin' Miss Smallpiece i' the occult, was a-doin' the same thing.

"She didn't take much to her auntie, though—nor to Mr. Moggs, neither; an' nateral enough. For, Lord knows, her auntie had no bowels nor nater, an'



"An' there she'd sit in front o' them things wif her chin on the palms o' her two hands."

Mr. Algernon Moggs was fifty-five if he was a week, an' owned a pug nose, an' long white teeth like tombstones, an' one thin, lonesome wisp o' red hair, drawn across the top o' his bald head. So, instead o' stayin' i' the parlor or out on the piazzas wif them, she'd come out i' the kitchen an' make candy, an' sit by the stove talkin' to me, an' tellin' me what good times she used to have at that Bryn Mawr place; an' how, as soon as she could get her business affairs settled, she was goin' away to Germany to study music some more. She played an' sang beautiful as it was; an' I didn't see as she had any more to learn, an' told her so. An' at that she laughed real hearty, an' said she only wished her music teachers thought so, too.

"What's Mr. Horace goin' to do if ye go away to Germany an' leave 'im

here pinin'?" says I. An' at that she colored up real red, an' laughed, an' said it wouldn't make no difference to Mr. Horace—that they was jist acquaintances.

"Acquaintanceship is queer an' wonderful things at your ages," says I.

"An' jist at that minute Mr. Horace himself called at the front door to take her for a walk.

"He was a fine, honest, hearty, good-appearin' young man was Mr. Horace, though awful fond o' jokin' an' teasin' around. He lived next door. He'd been away to Yale College, an' graduated real good, so his mother said; an' now he was goin' to be a civil engineer. I was glad to see him makin' up to Miss Virginia, for he

seemed jist the right sort for her; an', besides, I knew she was awful dull an' lonesome in her auntie's house wif no kith nor kin o' her own blood.

"I ast her one day if she was so minded to go to Germany why she didn't get her affairs settled up, an' go right off an' get it over with, for I saw plain enough she was eatin' her heart out for lonesomeness. She only laughed that time, an' started talkin' about somethin' else, an' didn't tell me what the trouble was. But afterward, whin she came to be better friends wif me, she told me the whole thing, which was what I had guessed long since.

"You see, whin her father died, she was undher age, an' he'd left all her money in care o' her aunt. An' now she couldn't get holt o' none o' 't at all, 'cause her auntie wouldn't give it up—as was only nateral to her—an' kept

puttin' her off wi' excuses all the time. I says why didn't she get a lawyer, an' have it took away by law. But she didn't like the thought o' doin' that; an' besides her auntie was that smooth-tongued about it, an' kep' promisin' she'd transfer the money to-morrow.

"All this time Miss Smallpiece was gettin' holt of more an' more fads for self-improvement. Mr. Reginald Moggs, whom she'd made the acquaintance of at a Hindu meetin', had got her all worked up about what he called the 'Occult.' Though I misdoubt he himself was more interested in hitchin' up to a nice bit o' money than he was in any occult business. Anyway, if ye'll believe me, she'd fixed up a place in her bedroom to do idol worshipin' in. She had a little, squat, ugly, heathen idol made out o' bone or the like set up i' the middle o' a little table, an' two punk sticks on each side o' him burnin' away an' makin' a godless smell. An' there she'd sit in front o' them things wi' her chin on the palms o' her two hands, starin' straight in front of her as if she was daft, an' concentratin', Miss Virginia told me afther, on success in sellin' her farms an' real estates.

"I says to her myself one day when I was i' the room makin' her bed, an' she was busy settin' up fresh punk sticks i' the place o' the old, burned-out ones: 'Miss Smallpiece,' says I, 'do ye not considher it wrong, you bein' a church member, to worship a heathen idol like that?' An' at that she give me a long harangue about how lots o' church members did it, an' the two needn't interfere wi' each other, an' how we all ought to take the best out o' everythin' for advancement an' culture, an' she herself hoped in time to make her whole life a art work. Did ye ever hear the like? An' if worshipin' idols, an' chawin' up hard crusts, an' sleepin' on porches, an' swashin' out yer insides wi' gallons on gallons o' cold wather means bein' cultured, she was cultured, all right, an' no mistake. Though I misdoubt that them as is allus seekin' afther things for their own profit is the ones that's least likely to come by any benefit from them.

"I ast Miss Virginia one day when she was out i' the kitchen stirrin' up candy what she thought of all these goin's on, an' if there'd ever been any weak-mindedness in her auntie's family; an' she said there wasn't that she knowed of, an' there was good in all them queer things, an' lots o' good in some o' them; but she was afraid her auntie didn't understand them very well, an' was thinkin' only o' gettin' out o' them what would help herself; which last was a thrue word, if there ever was, for a selfish-minded middle-aged woman I never hope to see.

"Well, things went on like that for months an' months. Miss Virginia thryin' to persuade her auntie to turn her money and property over to her, an' her auntie puttin' her off from day to day wi' promises. An' young Mr. Horace next door—an' Mr. Reginald Moggs, too—growin' more an' more attentive to Miss Virginia. I could see that Miss Virginia was becomin' mighty wrought up an' fidgety about not gettin' her money an' goin' away to study; an' I felt real sorry for her, being tied down there like she was a prisoner, an' not able to get to do nothin' she wanted to do.

"An' Mr. Horace, too, was awful indignant. Sometimes when they'd be walkin' on the porch or in the garden, an' Miss Smallpiece was away from home—acquirin' new cultures—I'd hear snatches of him argyfyin' wi' her, an' tellin' her she ought to stand up for her rights, an' if not, to let him take charge of it, an' he'd get her money for her, an' so on. An' generally she'd say: 'Oh, well, let's wait. Maybe she'll let me have it to-morrow.' But that there to-morrow, as ye'll be surmisin', never arrove.

"It came about one night that Miss Virginia had invited Mr. Horace in to dinner; an' I cooked them a real good meal, in spite o' Miss Smallpiece's bein' a Fletcherite—an' a stingy one at that. Well, ma'am, that there evenin' is one I shan't never forget if I live to be the age of a parrot.

"Mr. Moggs dropped in accidentally jist as the three o' them was sittin' down

—a accident that happened quite often about meal time—an' he an' Mr. Horace got to talkin' about the occult, an' especially about spirit rappin'. Now, it seems that Mr. Moggs had specialized in only one branch of the occult—idol worshipin' it was, though he called it by a different name—an' he owned up he didn't know much about spirit rappin'; so Mr. Horace did most o' the talkin'. An' it's surprised I was to hear him, too, for he was far an' away from bein' the sort that's likely to take up wi' nonsense. He got to tellin' how tables would move if some folks put their hands on thim, an' sometimes rap, an' how the dead could come back an' communicate wi' the livin'. It made me feel real creepy up my spine while I was a-passin' the plates an' things, though,

of course, I don't really believe in no sich foolishness.

"But Miss Smallpiece was the one that was dhrinkin' it all in. She's one o' them that's awful clever i' some ways, and in other ways that gullible an' ready to swaller everything that it's a shame. She was mighty sharp at a business bargain was Miss Smallpiece; it 'ud take a smart one to get the better o' her there. But when it come to fads, an' idol worshipin', an' supernaternal nonsense, she lapped it up like a kitten.

"There she sat wi' her eyes starin' wide open, an' her mouth 'most hangin' open, too, listenin' faster nor Mr. Horace could talk, an' exclaimin' how wonderful it all was, an' how there was more things in heaven an' earth—whatever they may mean.

"And did you ever move a table yourself, Mr. Horace?" says she to him, very sweet an' polite.

"Often," says he—which I suppose was nothin' but the livin' thruth.

"Suppose we have a little séance this evening," says she. "Four is just the right number, is it not?"

"All right," says Mr. Horace, careless like. "We might have a try."

"I thinks to myself I'd like fine to see a spirit tip a table over; an' so, afther I'd done up the dishes an' tidied meself a bit, I tiptoed into the hall that has a door openin' into the library; an', the door bein' ajar, I set me down in a chair to have a look at the monkey-shinin'.

"Mr. Horace sets a little table out i' the middle o' the floor,



"He got to tellin' how tables would move if some folks put their hands on thim."

an' they all dhraws up to 't, one on each side, Mr. Moggs facin' Miss Virginia, an' Mr. Horace facin' Miss Smallpiece. Then Mr. Horace gets up an' turns down the gas, so they was near in darkness.

"They all puts their hands on the table, palms down, like Mr. Horace tells them, an' sits there waitin' for the table to move. An' everything was that quiet you could feel your hair gettin' ready to rise on your head. But nothin' supernatural happened right away.

"There they sat an' sat, for what seemed to me nigh onto a half hour, the silence an' dark gettin' thicker every minute, but not a thing occurin' to the table. Then all of a sudden I heard Miss Smallpiece give a gasp, an' I could see by peerin' close that the table had begun to thremble undher their hands, an' to wabble about something queer an' creepy. An' then, wi'out a word o' warnin', it tips right over toward Mr. Horace, liftin' up its legs on the side o' Miss Smallpiece. An' Miss Smallpiece 'most jumped out o' her chair, she was that astonished an' scared.

"'Astounding!' whispers she to herself in a awe-strick tone. 'Simply astounding!'

"'Now,' says Mr. Horace, quite cool an' businesslike, 'I think we might possibly get some communication by raps. Three raps in spirit language mean *yes*, one rap *no*, and two *doubtful*. Won't you call for some one, Miss Smallpiece?'

"An' Miss Smallpiece, her voice all a-shakin' wi' excitement, says: 'Is that you, James?' which was the name of her twin brother as had gone before.

"Thump, thump, thump! Three big, healthy raps came from undther that table. An' even Miss Virginia looked scared.

"'Am I managing your real-estate affairs as you think they ought to be managed?' says she, in a trembly tone.

"Three more able-bodied raps.

"'Will I sell the farm at Thomasville for what I am asking for it?'

"One lonesome rap.

"'Wonderful!' she whispers again.



"I set me down in a chair to have a look at the monkey-shinin'."

'Wonderful!' though her mien showed some disappointment about the farm.

"'Suppose you call some one, Miss Virginia,' says Mr. Horace, seein' that Miss Smallpiece looked kind o' flabbergasted at the last answer she'd got.

"'Is my father there?' says Miss Virginia, sort o' weak, as though she'd rather not.

"Thump, thump, thump! says the table, very loud an' violent.

"'Do you think I ought to go to Germany this year, and go on with my music?'

"Thump, thump, thump! louder an' more violent than ever.

"I peeked out o' the corner o' my eye at Miss Smallpiece, an' her face looked sort o' white an' queer.

"'Hush!' says Mr. Horace, in a tone like there was a ghost expected immediate. 'It's possible that we might get a materialization. I thought I saw a speck of light on the wall just over there.' Pointin' to a dark spot back of Miss Virginia, an' well in sight o' Miss Smallpiece.

"They all looks, wi' their eyes starin'

out o' their heads, an' especially Miss Smallpiece; an' I could see her hands twitchin' in her lap, she was that wrought up an' nervous like.

"There!" whispers Mr. Horace, tense an' low. 'Did you see that?'

"Shure enough, there on the dark wall there come a little flickerin' glimmer o' reddish light, an' then all was dark again.

"Perhaps it will come back," says Mr. Horace, in a awed whisper.

"An' there they all set stiff an' stark waitin' for it to come again.

"All of a sudden Miss Smallpiece give a start an' a little gasp; an' no wonder. For there on the wall, where the little flickerin' light had been, was a patch o' red brightness, an' on the patch o' red brightness was the word *Transfer* in big, wavy, black letters, that kept changin' an' writhin' all the time like snakes.

"But there was somethin' I could see from where I was sittin' that none o' the rest o' thim could see—an' that was a little black object in Mr. Horace's hand that he kept a-turnin' an' a-manipulatin' all the time them ghostly doin's was afoot. So I wasn't scared none.

"They hadn't no sooner got a good look at that wavy, black, writhin' word *Transfer* than it twisted out an' wound itself into another; an' this time it was the little word *My*. Next thing they know that give out, an' it was *Daughter's*, as plain as the nose on yer face; an' then the word *Fortune*. An' that last big, black word was no sooner seen writhin' on the red behind it than Miss Smallpiece keeled out of her chair in a dead faint.

"They turned on the gas, an' I fetched cold water, an' sal volatile, an' sich things, an' we brung her to, Miss Virginia lookin' real sad an' self-re-

proachful, an' Mr. Horace kind o' subdued, but tickled an' mischievous as could be undher it all; an' Mr. Reginald Moggs sort o' stunned an' foolish like. An' there was no more ghostly doin's that night. Mr. Horace an' Mr. Moggs went away home, an' the rest o' us to our beds.

"But the next mornin', shure enough, Miss Smallpiece was off bright an' airy down to her lawyer's place. An', if ye'll believe me, she come back about noon wi' all the papers transferrin' Miss Virginia's rightful property into her name, an' handed them over to her all right an' tight."

"Did Miss Virginia go to Germany?" I asked.

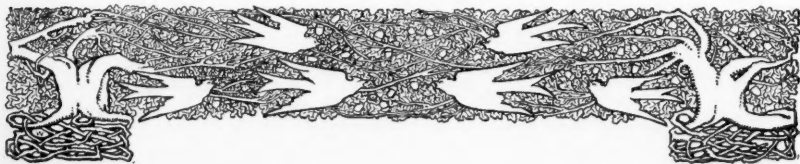
"She done that—right as soon as she could git packed up, an' glad she was to git away from her auntie. She's been over there nigh onto this two years now, livin' wi' two other young ladies as was her friends at Bryn Mawr. Every once in a while she writes me a letter, an' tells me what good times she's havin', an' how she's gettin' to be quite a good player an' singer."

"What became of Miss Smallpiece?"

"Her an' Mr. Moggs got married. Seein' he couldn't git a large fortune an' a nice-lookin' young lady, he contented himself wi' a smaller fortune an' a lady not so young nor so nice lookin'. I'm not for wishin' ill to nobody, an' I'm shure they have my blessin', an' I hope they'll live happy ever after."

"And how about Mr. Horace?"

"Aw, he's to an' from Germany somethin' continuous an' oneasy. Miss Virginia's a-comin' back this fall for to get married to him, an' keep him from spendin' all his time an' money on steamship thravelin'. An' I'm to be cook to them as soon as they go to housekeepin'."





THE BUDDHA AND THE BIRTHDAY CAKE

BY
Nalbro Bartley

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

IT began the same way hundreds of other such affairs do, with no sensational feature start, or record-breaking time limit. To be exact, it was before the Cub's birthday. Newspaper offices do not observe birthdays. The only times of celebration are election day and pay day.

But the Cub had never spent a birthday in a newspaper office, or away from home. After all, one is twenty but once, and to pass such an occasion without so much as the tooting of a tin horn, or the buying of an extra ice-cream sundae, would seem cruel.

So she mentioned the fact to the editor of the women's page, who smiled at her benevolently because of her youngness, and gave her permission to have a birthday cake, with pink candles, adorn the exchange table of the women's room.

The cake was an ornate affair. The Cub patiently punched pink candles into every smooth spot of its surface, and upon the morning of her twentieth birthday she bore the cake in her arms up the stairs, not trusting to the wiles of the elevator man.

The editor of the women's page was the first of the staff to demand a piece. She munched the fruity filling solemnly, and said:

"Cub, it's great to be twenty!"

In the Cub's absence, the city editor took in the show.

"Gee, she's a kid!" he remarked to the editor of the women's page, who agreed with him.

On the strength of that, they cut another piece.

The sporting editor viewed the cake gravely.

"So you're twenty?" he said. "You've got a long race ahead of you."

And he let a plummy raisin drop to the ground as he patted her on the back.

There was a string of reporters and people from the business office who came, saw, and swiped, and the Cub's cheeks were flushed, and her eyes twice their natural size.

"Ain't she the baby kid?" was the remark quoted all day; and while the elevator man told the managing editor that "the little girl on the sassiety page was cel'bratin'," the staff skirmished their desks to find some appropriate token of their regard.

The Sunday editor surprised her with an advance copy of Taft on "The Panama Canal Question"; the sporting editor sent her three pictures of Kid McCoy and a frayed riding whip, once used by a well-known horsewoman; the city editor presented her with two Nick Carter weeklies and a new pencil sharpener; while the managing editor strolled in with a pasteboard cucumber filled with candy; the editorial writers and reporters piled high her desk with ink

erasers, rulers, bottles, packs of playing cards, poker chips, and faulty copy paper.

"But there is some one else that hasn't had a piece," said the Cub, when, at half-past five, she had reduced almost to fragments the once imposing layer cake, and had smudged every bit of frosting over her copy. "I counted twenty-two, and I think I——"

"But some have had two pieces," said the editor of the women's page. "You know, I cut an extra hunk this morning."

"But there is some one else," persisted the Cub, shaking her head. "Why, of course—I know! It's Bob Milton. I haven't seen him all day."

"Hum!" said the editor of the women's page, as she slashed a New York exchange.

The Cub hesitated a moment. Bob Milton was two years her senior. He came on the sheet five years ago, with the earmarks of office boy still noticeable. He had been under age, but a worker, and had been "stuck" with secondhand police stories. He plodded patiently back and forth to the station houses, pounding out on his frazzly machine stories of headless bodies being found, hair-pulling street fights, runaway boys, and carving affairs between the foreigners.

Bob Milton had a contempt for himself, that he had been "stuck" for five years, and he wished, in his rambling, incoherent way, that he had stayed at school a little longer; at least, long enough so that the desk need not always correct his spelling, and the city editor say:

"There's no one left to send to the art lecture but Milton—so we better get Farnham, of the Associated Press, to cover it."

He watched the birthday party with interest. He watched the advent of the Cub into the office with even greater interest. His mother wore print wrappers, and was generally having another baby for his father to grumble about. His sisters wore piles of artificial hair, and had "gentlemen friends" who walked out with them, and "kept com-

pany." Once or twice during the winter, Bob would take the night off to go to an East Side dance, where he would get busy with some of the little blondes that looked lonesome.

That was Bob's social life. With the fellows, he was considered a good sort, but possessed of abrupt and decided limitations. He would play hearts and poker until the sun warned them that the scrub brigade wanted to get busy with the accumulation of cigarette butts under foot; he would eat at the best hotel, or the Busy Bee three-cent lunch, and, even if he would wear wing collars and bargain ties, he was generally counted in on a prize fight, and would bet his overcoat at election.

The coming of the Cub created a new epoch in his life. For the first time in the years of grinding out police stories, he paused to read her picture stories and society introductions. He would look up the words she used in the city-room encyclopedia, and puzzle over "how she ever doped all that line of talk out."

He had been introduced to her some weeks after she had been taken on the staff, but their acquaintance never grew beyond a good morning, or the occasional collision in the hall.

The Cub thought him an odd-looking boy, and, in her own unsophisticated way, "nice." She decided that his eyes were romantically dark, and she wished he would not always say so many profane things when she was trying to phone about some pink tea.

But to the boy, the Cub was vastly different. From her blue eyes and straight, long lashes to her round, white sailor hat and broad collars and cuffs, she was virtue, beauty, truth, and goodness personified. From the time she said: "Mr. Milton, the cat in the press-room is hungry, and I can't find a saucer to give it any milk in," to when he had rescued her from being ground into bits by one of the presses, she had been the one redeeming thing in life itself.

It was the difference that appealed to him. Her hair was always smooth looking; even when it was rumpled,



"Three dollar and a half," said the Japanese, after a moment.

there was a difference between it and the heads of his sisters; her waists were seldom anything but blue and white, and she did not go to dances or The Home Delight Theater, or chew gum, as did the East Side blondes.

She was always carrying books about, and once, when it rained, and he held an umbrella over her to the car, she said that when she was in New York she went to all the Ibsen productions. The boy looked for Ibsen in the encyclopedia of names, and found out he was a Norwegian who wrote "A Doll's House," and some other foolish titles, and he wondered how so dear a girl could read such rot.

Then their friendship stopped. The Cub plunged into work with a will, and

grew a little thinner, and white looking, and the boy still did the East Side police stories, jollied the blondes, played hearts, and wore the wing collars.

But the birthday brought about an opportunity. The boy watched the holiday spirit of the staff with wistful eyes, and pounded the keys of his typewriter savagely, as he saw the sporting editor demolishing his share of the spoil, and heard the Cub laugh when she chased an editorial writer down the hall, with the command to bring back their one paper napkin.

The boy wasn't going to go near the Cub; he didn't want her to think he was hanging around for a piece of cake, or that he cared whether or not he was invited to her party. Newspaper offices



He went to the art gallery with her, and laboriously looked up the numbers.

were not the places to have foolish séances. Unconsciously he cut off two legs from the "unknown laborer found crushed at daylight at the East Street crossing," so determined was he not to enter into the celebration.

The laughter in the society room increased, and the boy shut the door of the sport room, where he had his own corner, with a bang, and swore his vilest at the city-room cat, who basked near the register.

Then he had a change of heart, as he saw a small girl in a blue suit and hat slip down the hall—a rose in her buttonhole and a pretty flush on her cheeks. She waved her notebook at him merrily. The boy's eyes filled with tears, and he shook his head and hit

himself across the chest—but the tears were still there.

"I'll buy her something," he said to the city-room cat.

He deposited his heap of ready money on the type-writer table. There was three dollars and sixty-five cents.

"What can I get her, you sore-eyed, skulky old reprobate?" he asked the cat.

The cat closed its eyes blissfully, while the boy forgot his legless laborer, and wondered if a bunch of blossoms, or candy, would be the thing. Somewhere in his brain was stored the fact that the Cub collected idols—idols of any and all descriptions—and that she told him she lived a whole week on egg drinks once, in order to possess a certain squidgy-nosed god Brahm.

If any one but the Cub had told him that, he would have said they were a bit "stewed." But, being the Cub, he listened respectfully, and tried to say easily: "It's a fine fad—fine!"

So he gathered up his savings, and trudged to the best Oriental store in town, where he demanded to be shown idols.

A suave Japanese showed him into a small anteroom, lit with old lanterns and perfumed with burning joss. He showed the boy a number of carved ivory things, which were waved aside; then he brought forth brass manikins and silver. But the boy felt she would not care for these, so he demanded to be shown "some old junk."

Turning half around, he caught sight of a small, dull-green and black-metal Buddha, sitting in his majestic, watchful attitude. He snatched it eagerly.

"How much?"

"Three dollar and a half," said the Japanese, after a moment.

"Wrap it up," the boy said, in husky tones.

"Very old, very cheap," began the Jap earnestly.

"Cut the side-show spiel," he answered, grasping the little package, and making for the door. "But if you could see who it was for, you'd be picking cherry blossoms in your dreams—you little son of a gun."

And the Jap bowed gravely.

Once outside, a horrible presentiment filled him. She might not care for it; she might have one like it; she might—not—accept—it! A touring car almost swept down both the Buddha and the boy. The whirl of the machine brought him to his senses, and he remembered that he had to cover both police headquarters and the federal building.

The green Buddha and the boy covered the beat feverishly, while the Cub happily ate crumbs of cake, received congratulations, and made the Sunday editor and the music critic tear their hair and shout for silence.

"Ye gods! Any one would think this was a reunion of the Browning Club," said the society editor, coming in after a round of bridge parties and five o'clocks, harassed and edgy.

Whereupon, the Cub cut off a generous slice of cake, and presented it, and the society editor, from mere shame, gave the Cub two new carbon sheets and a violet note pad.

After every one had been served, the Cub slipped into the sport room, and put her hand on the boy's shoulder.

"Mr. Milton," she said, with all the dignity of her twenty years, "help me celebrate."

She deposited the last piece of cake in his rather grimy hand.

The boy turned first red, then white, as he said, in a muffled tone, "Thanks," making one mouthful of the cake.

The Cub lingered at the door.

"Aren't you going to congratulate me?" she said wistfully.

Thereupon the boy rose to his feet, and held out his hand.

"I should say I do," he said. "And will you please——"

He tucked the package into her hands.

Now, the Cub realized fully the popularity of a practical joke in a news-

paper office, and she supposed that some peculiarity of her own had been hard hit, and that Bob Milton was the chosen person to present her with its outward symbol. So she only smiled, and said good night.

The boy sat down at his typewriter in dazed fashion.

"And she took it," he told himself again and again.

Then he turned in, and wrote the best story he had done in weeks.

The Cub went on her way to the third story front, laden with gifts. She was a trifle homesick, after all. And the attention and petting from the staff scarcely made up for her usual home birthday. After she had her dinner, she changed her white waist and blue skirt for a still bluer kimono, and let the heavy braids of hair fall carelessly over her shoulders. Then she opened the package.

At first she was sure there was a mistake. She looked at the little Buddha carefully, and promptly did a most un-journalistic sort of thing—she cried. Meanwhile, Bob Milton was sitting in an East Side police station, swapping yarns with the desk sergeant, and wondering what she thought when she opened it.

The Cub wrote him a shy little note, and she kissed the Buddha good night, while she wondered if his eyes had heavy eyelashes, or if they were merely like other people's.

The boy read the note with throbbing pulses. She called him: "Dear Mr. Bob Milton," and said she would ask any favor he wished from her new god, King Bud.

He tried to see her that day, but she had a half a dozen club stunts to cover, and a lecture on the subconscious mind. Also, she instinctively fought shy of the sport room, and was glad the office afforded a back stairway as well as the main one and an elevator.

Three days passed, during which the Cub assiduously stuck to the backward route, and the boy grew savage for ever having been such a fool, while the staff forgot all about the birthday, and became busy with election.

Then the Cub was called on the sport phone one evening, and she found that central couldn't switch her on the main line. After she hung up the phone, she found herself face to face with the boy, who placed himself in the doorway determinedly.

"You've been very busy lately," he said slowly.

"Very," said the Cub. "Been doing ad write-ups."

"Going home to dinner?" said the boy.

"Haven't time," said the Cub.

There was a short pause; the boy asked softly: "Will you come with—me?"

The Cub forgot the waiting pile of copy to write, the evening's hard work ahead of her.

"If you want me to," she answered, even more softly.

The boy's face was lit with a holy light as the Cub tore down the hall and worked at fever rate, while the resounding clang of the boy's machine made her heart beats number many.

The boy and the Cub met each other in the outside hall in confused embarrassment. He put his arm up to replace her falling fur, and she pulled her veil over her face nervously. The boy, with the desire to please, suggested the most expensive hotel; and the Cub, with the lack of sense that twenty years employs, accepted. And the dinner was an elaborate one, the Cub chattering easily about her work, and the boy listening with a glorified look on his usually quiet countenance.

He bought a heavy black cigar for himself, and a bunch of violets for the Cub, and then they remembered that the amalgamated liquor dealers had a banquet that evening, and that Sudermann's "Magda" was going to be read by some local personage, and that their presence was required at both places, regardless.

The Cub wrote her copy that night with trembling fingers—she had never been given a bunch of violets before. There is something sweet and untellable in the feelings of a girl when her

first beau-bouquet is hers. The Cub laid the flowers beside her typewriter, and even the heaviness of Sudermann was forgotten, the perfume of the violets stealing over her story.

She took her homeward car with a feeling of treading on air. She slept with the violets close beside her bed, and opened her blue eyes the next morning to see them, a bit wilted, but still smiling at her.

The boy relived that dinner. He remembered little of what she said. It was the sight of her hair, curly, with a shot of gold through it; her eyes, deep, unfathomable; the dimple in her left cheek, that he remembered. It woke something within him that he had been ignorant of possessing. He was a boy no longer.

"She's great!" he told the city-room cat, who blinked in agreement.

So the story went on. It was a pretty, simple story. The boy, who covered some of the second-class theaters, would take the Cub with him on Monday nights. Before the performance, they would "go out to eat." The Cub, whose ideas of economy were becoming alarming, walked bravely past the hotels to a certain half-Bohemian café, with funny wooden chairs and tables, and a quaint music box that played old love songs. Then they would saunter slowly to the theater, while the boy smoked and told the Cub, in his halting, awkward manner, all his hopes and fears. They would laugh at the play, at the people, at themselves. After it was over, the boy would tear to the office, and dash out his copy before making a quick exit, unseen by the city room. And he would hurry back to the Cub, who would be waiting for him in a corner of one of the hotel parlors. They would say a lingering good night, as they planned for their next meeting.

The boy no longer wore red neckties—he wore the ones which the Cub picked out for him—and he did not play hearts or pool. He let the liquid lunch diet severely alone, and passed the East Side blondes by with a curt nod.

And on Tuesday evenings the boy and girl would have a special dinner at a certain Japanese tea room. The Cub would always wear a white fluffy-ruffy collar and a crisp blue tie, and the boy would patiently comb back his black, straight hair, and dig savagely away at his finger nails.

Thursday evenings they would go to the theater—really, truly go, as the Cub said. The boy would take the night off, and the Cub would put on her one evening frock and tan coat. He would call for her, with as much ceremony as if they were not two foolish, ignorant children, playing with the most subtle, dangerous, sweet attribute of life.

Sunday evenings the boy would steal time to see the Cub, having got a story "up his sleeve beforehand." The Cub would wait for him in the boarding-house sitting room, with a throbbing heart, and the boy, with equally as abnormal valvular action, would sit opposite her, and they would talk of a certain bungalow, which ought to be high up on the cliff overlooking the sea—far away from all the world.

He borrowed the Cub's books, and painfully plodded through them. He went to the art gallery with her, and laboriously looked up the numbers in the catalogue. At her request, he gave his mother a Christmas flower, and his little brothers and sisters toys.

The Cub told him gravely that she would not take an expensive gift from him, such as he intended. She picked



"Cut out Bob Milton—you're being talked about—talked about."

out a little, red-leather book of quaint quotations, instead. On Christmas Eve they went to the theater and then to supper, and then, as if to prove their versatility, to midnight mass. The boy was a Catholic. The Cub had never been to a holiday mass. The candles, the chimes, the music, the flowers, and the incense, added to the sturdy presence of her pal beside her, made her think all the world in harmony.

It was late when the boy said Merry Christmas and good night. She thought with regret of the shortness of time between three o'clock and seven. The editor of the women's page gave her a cold good morning, as she came in, although the Cub wished her a happy holiday with her usual enthusiasm.

She settled down to work with a hurt feeling underneath. Her Christmas was spoiled. She worked faithfully all day, even though her eyes seemed closing, and there were moments when she caught herself dozing.

Her copy was handed in with hesitation, for the face of the older woman was stern and forbidding. The Cub lingered as she drew on her gloves.

"You're making an awful fool of yourself," said the editor of the women's page abruptly.

The Cub quivered all over, as if she had been struck.

"See here, kid," continued the woman as she faced the crimson-cheeked little girl. "Cut out Bob Milton—you're being talked about—talked about. That's plain, isn't it?"

"What—do you mean?" asked the Cub.

"Just what I said. That all the men on the paper, and a few people on the outside, are wondering what such a girl as you are can see in a common police reporter; how you can run around with him, that's all. I've been told by half a dozen people that you were at the theater with him on Monday night, at the hotels, and a bunch of other places besides. I don't say he isn't a gentleman—to you. But he's not your sort. You're making a fool of yourself, and your work is slumping like the devil. You can't write a decent picture story any longer, and you've let us be scooped three times on federation news."

The editor wheeled about, and began to pencil the Cub's copy.

The girl's face was white, and the sprig of holly in her buttonhole fell unheeded to the floor.

"I say," she began, in that boyish, impulsive way they all liked, "I say, you don't understand. We're just—"

The editor wheeled about again.

"You're a fool!" she repeated. "And the office won't stand for it. Neither will I. That's all—you've got to cut it out."

"I can't," said the Cub weakly.

"See here, haven't you ever trotted the town with other men?" asked the

editor sharply. "Haven't you ever had a decent chap show you about? One that knew how to use a finger bowl and a personal pronoun?"

"No," confessed the Cub miserably. "I never knew any one else."

The older woman threw down her pencil with an exasperated air.

"Far be it from me," she said, "to disillusion young dreams. But I'll tell you right now that you'll never make anything out of yourself as long as you keep up such an affair. You're killing every bit of ability you own, and we all expected good things from you."

The Cub gathered her fur together slowly, seeing that the interview was at an end.

"Good night," she said lamely.

"Night," snapped the editor.

"I want to see you," one of the editorial writers said—one of the Cub's best friends.

The girl's chin trembled, but she took the offered seat, and prepared to listen. The editorial writer seemed to find it hard to introduce his theme. He twisted about in his chair, lit his pipe, and played with a paper knife nervously.

"I like you," he began abruptly, "and I think you've got the real stuff in you. But you're making an awful fool of yourself with Bob Milton. You've got to stop it before people really think that you prefer that stamp of a boy. You know that I trust you, and I know that this has all come about through innocence on your part, and very likely his. But he isn't the sort of a fellow for you. He's way beneath you, and we're all disappointed to think you stop to pay attention to such a boy. It isn't because he's poor, or a police reporter; it's because of what he is—his caliber. You're worth more. You have the making of a magnificent woman in you, if you don't spoil it all by a foolish act. You're killing every chance you have by running around with him. I'm a failure, little girl, because I was foolish twenty years ago. That's why I'm talking to you now."

The editorial writer paused, and the Cub let a tear roll down her cheek.

"We've been friends," she said softly.

"That was all. We never thought about other people. You wouldn't understand. Of course, I realize you care about me, or else you wouldn't talk to me like this; but I can't hurt—him."

"He'll survive," said the editorial writer. "It's only puppy love on his part. You're too sensitive a make-up to have even puppy love not leave its wound. He may get tanked, and be grouchy for a while, but that's all. The city-room bunch are all wondering about it, little girl; they're all so disappointed."

"Good night," said the Cub monotonously.

"Think it over," said the editorial writer, as he turned back to his machine, "and tell me if I'm not right."

The Cub found her way down the back stairs. She was to see the boy that night, and have a Christmas supper together. The Cub had the same feeling that a hunter has who wounds but not kills his first deer, and must watch its death anguish before he can bring home the head, rejoicing.

The absolute innocence of the girl had been jarred. She had been told, with a brutal force, very true facts. But told them in a way which only startled and stunned her, instead of making her realize their wisdom. She thought of the boy, of the editor of the women's page, of the editorial writer—and then of the pure pleasure of that first gift, the little Buddha.

There is something wonderfully sweet in the way that a boy calls you "Dear," in his trembling, uncertain tones, and in the way he places his strong, brown hand on your arm with timid, wondering fingers; there is something equally sweet in the reverence and devotion which a boy shows to the girl whom he first loves. There was a purity about the affair of this girl and boy which put to shame similar affairs of the editor of the women's page—tainted, blasé frolics of this censor.

Those interferers—they did a worldly wise act for the Cub's career when they bullied her into believing that she was of finer clay than the other, and

that her life's harmony must be played upon the keys of a typewriter and a city-room table. But they left in her heart a certain sadness and hollowness, which would make each note of the harmony ring a bit untrue.

The boy came promptly, and the Cub rose quickly to meet him. There were tears in her eyes.

"Bob," she said softly, "you must stop coming to see me."

The boy let his arms fall to his sides.

"You mean——"

"The powers that be object. They say—we are too different, and my work is bad. They say—people—are—talking, and I've got to stop it all. Pal, dear, I'm sorry; but we can't be comrades any longer."

The boy's face was a dark, sullen color, and there was something in his eyes which the Cub had never seen before.

"They are talking," he said forcibly. "They are talking! Why, every one of those same people are—see here, you can't let it matter. You're all I've got. You've made a different fellow out of me. I've tried as I never tried before to be on the square, to live up to your standard. I know I'm not good enough, but I hoped—don't it beat hell how things break?"

She put her arms about him.

"We've been foolish, they say," she whispered, "and the powers that be are angry."

He freed himself with a jerk.

"Then you won't be my pal any longer?" he demanded.

The Cub thought of the glorious feeling of comradeship—then of the office, the men and women who were "talking about her," who said she must have a career; the men and women who waited until they were beyond the Cub age before they started "making fools of themselves." Her lips curled scornfully, as she thought of their questionable good times. She thought of the time ahead, when she would be a clever newspaper woman, noted for doing odd, unique work; when she would have lines under her eyes, and wear dotted veils, and smoke cigarettes, and call the

men by their first names, and say that she was "a staff man." Then the Cub would be acting wisely, and she could use the increase in her salary to pay for extra time in a nerve sanitarium.

She thought of all this before she answered. She thought, too, of the boy, who would hate her, and of the unhappiness and longing that would be hers; and she knew, in the years to come, no matter how great her success, there would always be a memory, sweet and very dear to her—of her first pal.

But the Cub straightened her shoulders, and shut her eyes.

"Good-by," she said sturdily.

"Oh, my God!" said the boy, stumbling from the room.

The Cub met the eyes of the editor of the women's page without flinching the next day. In her hand was the little Buddha, ready to be returned.

"It's all off," she said sharply. "What's on the books for to-day?"

"Sensible kid," said the editor, wondering if it was possible that she had cried last night, or if it was the light she was standing in. "Fine business! I knew you would. Now get busy with the art gallery."

"East Side police to-day, Bob," said the city editor to the boy.

The boy threw on his coat with a fling, wondering if the Buddha would

burn easily, or if he could pound it in pieces.

"I suppose," said the editorial writer to the editor of the women's page, "that we did the one thing to make them rush ahead and marry."

His eyes were anxious looking, and he looked appealingly at the woman.

"Give it up," said the editor of the women's page. "They did, anyway. And maybe the boy can manage a country newspaper—the kid will probably turn in and write it for him."

"They didn't wait long to go," said the editorial writer, as he glanced at the Cub's good-by letter. "It was luck Milton had the job thrown at him."

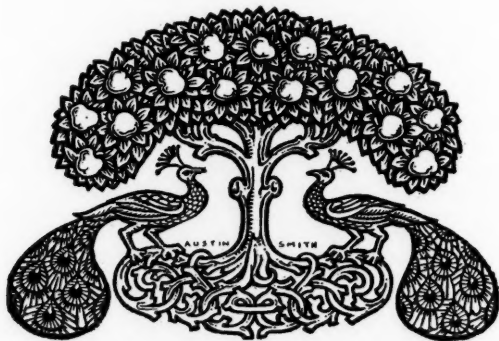
"I bet the Cub got it," said the woman. "She can spell."

"Left alone, they might have drifted apart as quickly as they came together," mused the editorial writer. "I can see now where we bullied her."

The woman stared across the street at a rival newspaper office with a wistful air.

"Who knows? Maybe she's chosen the piece with the most plums, after all."

"Or perhaps," finished the editorial writer, half ashamedly, "perhaps the piece with plums is not meant to be hers."



A Play at Parentage

by
Courtney Ryley Cooper

ILLUSTRATED BY
H. HAYGARTH LEONARD



A PLUSH-BOTTOMED bumblebee, driving on like a bullet across the field of stubble, suddenly threw on the emergency brakes, and came to a buzzing stop above a brownish, open patch in the yellow expanse. Something was wrong. Either for once in his life he had missed the way home from the honeysuckle vines, or a catastrophe had befallen the household of his numerous colony. Or—and here Mr. Bumblebee swung in a wide circle to further assure himself of the new view of things—in his absence, the colony had chosen a new domicile, for within a foot of where the old home had been was a new one of earthenware, with a nice, wide, round hole at the top. Little did Mr. Bumblebee know of the watery grave that awaited below. He swung wide again, allowed his wings to whirl with their settling rapidity, and swooped downward to—

“Buz-z-z-e-e-r-r-r-r-r-r! Ker-plunk!”

With that, a witness to the tragedy emerged from the shelter of near-by

wheat shock, laughed gently, gave a satisfied pull at the long, white mustache which drooped over his kindly old mouth, while the eyes above glistened.

“Theh!” he exclaimed to a pair of tiny feet which projected from the straw. “Theh! Gad, suh, Ah’ll lay a wageh thet theh’s somethin’ yo’-all ain’t seen befo’.”

Quiet from the wheat shock. The white-haired one rose, stretched himself to the utmost length of his six feet of spare figure, pushed the spreading felt hat far back on his head, and then sat down again.

“No, suh,” he ruminated, “theh ain’t no bumblebee juggin’ in th’ city. Now, yo’ wouldn’t ‘spose thet, knowin’ as a bumblebee is, he’d low hisself to be took in thet way? But, suh, put a jeg o’ watch theh, rumple up th’ nest with a long stick, an’, well, yo’ got th’ honey. Ah remembeth one time, back in fifty-fo’, when—”

Suddenly he stopped, and smiled to himself.

“Gad, ef Ah ain’t toted yo’-all these fifty-six miles from town ‘thout tellin’



Loped across the field in imitation of the family horse.

yo' mah name, or how Ah kem to get yo', or—heah, heah—heah!"

The last was addressed with ever-increasing emphasis, for following the line of least resistance on up the chubby legs, past the faded little blouse, and into the babyish face, one could very easily determine the reason for all the silence. The companion was fast asleep.

He was a tiny little boy, so small that the elderly one's hand seemed almost gigantic as he leaned over and gently touched him on the shoulder. There was no response. A kindly little shake, such as only a loving old man can give, followed, and then:

"Bobby! Bobby, suh!"

A whine and a turn of the head, but the eyes did not open.

"Bobby, looky heah, suh; whch's yo' spo'tin' blood? We-all's juggin' bumbees!"

This time the eyes opened, a bit widely at first, and there came a frightened little cry that soon was hushed in the embrace of the other.

"Neveh min'," the elderly one crooned, as he stroked the uncombed hair; "neveh min'."

The answer was a fast-brightening smile as two little arms went about the tall man's neck.

"Went t' sleep," came the optimistic rejoinder.

"So yo' did, so yo' did. Well, juggin' bumbees ain't so excitin'. Now, lemme see what-all Ah got in mah pockets? Ah-h-h-h-h-h!" with a gesticulation of delight. "Ah thought so. Now, suh, we'll go oveh heah to th' crick, an' Ah'll show yo'-all somethin'. We're goin' to fish fo' crawpappies!"

Bobby, down below, grasping manfully one finger of the other's hand as he tumbled over the clods and ridges of sharp-edged straw, looked up and laughed. The language was all new to him, but the tone of the voice carried confidence. He liked this kindly old man who had taken him out of the city into a world he had never seen before, and he was trying his best to enjoy himself in the amusements of the other—although he could understand not one bit of what they all meant.

"As Ah was about to say, when Ah obsehved yo'-all was asleep," the tall man was saying, as they turned into the big road with its fringe of primroses, "Ah ain't introduced mahse'f. Mah name, suh, is Wes'mo'land, Colonel Wes'mo'land, an' from now on yo'-all's goin' to be mah little boy. How did it happen?" he asked, in answer to the stolid silence below. "Well, Ah can't jes' say. 'Pears to be a sorta round o' accidents. Heah Ah'd been livin' down in th' big house, all ba mahse'f, until Ah jes' felt Ah was gettin' crabbed an' old, an' so Ah jes' up an' goes to St. Louis, seekin' company. Well, bless me, suh, if heah ain't th' crick!"

They had come to a line of trees overhanging a little, muddy, sluggish stream, which seemed to come from nowhere in particular, and which seemed even less worried about its des-

tion. The colonel pulled a package from his pocket, and unrolled it, revealing a few pieces of liver tied to long strings. Leaving the child for a moment, he hurried to a small papaw tree, and cut several switches, then attached a string and the accompanying piece of liver to each one of them. One by one, he tossed them into the stream, and stuck the butt ends of the switches into the muddy bank.

"Now, suh," he explained to Bobby, "we'll jes' set down an' wait developments. Come heah an' get on mah knee. Fust thing yo' know yo'll be catchin' yo' death o' cold, settin' on thet damp groun'. Now, thet's betteh. But, as Ah was sayin'—looky heah, Bobby; how old are yo'?"

"Four ye-ars," the person addressed said very sedately.

"Um-humph, so it is, so it is. Ah disremembered fo' a moment. Thet's what th' jedge said, come to think. An' yo' maw's all th' folks yo' got, too?"

Bobby brightened perceptibly.

"Where's she?" he asked.

"Back in town, sonny, back in town, but never min'. Ah was goin' to tell yo', as Ah said, Ah was gettin' crabbed, so Ah jes' went down to th' city, an' th' fust thing Ah knew, Ah'd drifted in th' juvenile co'te. Cose, Ah didn't have no business theh, but when Ah heard yo' maw tell what a hahd time she'd had since yo' paw'd died, an' seein's how she looked so respect'ble an' well raised, suh, an' Ah kinda looked at yo', and yo' kinda looked at me, an' we both kinda grinned, didn't we?"

This last was accompanied by a deep, happy chuckle, a squirming, and a babyish laugh as the colonel's fingers sought the ribs of the little boy on his knee.

"An' suh, when Ah seen all them things, suh, an' th' way yo' maw took on, Ah jes' says to mahse'f, says Ah,

'Thet little boy's goin' to have a good home, an' well, heah we be. Humph—humph—looky out, theh, looky out, theh—easy now, suh—heah, Bobby, we'd betteh be lookin' afteh these lines, or them crawpappies'll be stealin' evehy bit o' bait we've got!'"

Every line was taut, an evidence that on the liver end were various-sized crawfish, or "freshwater lobsters," busily engaged in attempting to eat up the bait. Carefully, while Bobby looked



He tied a great white cloth tightly about his own waist.

on with nonunderstanding interest, the colonel raised one of the sticks until the whiskers of the crawfish showed above water. Then he slowly lowered his hand, and grasped one of the antennae-like feelers in his fingers. A tremendous flipping was the result, with a triumphant shout from the colonel as the crawfish was thrown high in the air to land on the dry bank and immediately begin backsliding efforts to reach the water again.

The developments surprised Bobby, and he jumped back in half fright. Then, as he noticed the moving object

on the bank, he leaned forward, and stuck out a chubby little hand to satisfy the cravings of his childlike curiosity. A warning cry from the colonel stopped him.

"Heah!" the elderly one exclaimed, as he grasped Bobby by the waist, and lifted him high off the ground. "Don' yo' tech him! Mah goodness, ef he'd eveh get his pinchehs on thet little han' o' yo's, he'd chaw it right slap off! Humph!" He was looking up now and across the fields at the reddening sun. "We'd betteh be goin' up to th' house. Fust thing we know, we'll be a couple o' babes in th' woods, an' th' bihds'll have to come along an' coveh us up with leaves an'—evch heah about th' babes in th' woods?"

"Uh-huh," answered Bobby in the negative, as he was lifted higher than ever in the colonel's arms. "Whas babes in woods?"

"Tell yo' all about it some time. Mah goodness gracious, fust thing yo' know out heah in th' country, yo' ain't goin' to be a baby any mo'. Fust thing yo' know, yo'll be a great, big man, plowin' co'n, an' hahvestin' an'—humph, didn't know thet ol' sun was so low. Gettin' hungrier evehy minute, too. Come on now, let's see ef mah ol' bones is too wo'n out fo' runnin'."

And with the little boy chuckling in his arms, Colonel Westmoreland, for the first time in many years, loped across the fields, first in imitation of the family horse, then as a steam engine, and finally a bucking broncho, until at last he paused at a worn old stile, beyond which showed the cedar-lined path to a severe-appearing, lonely, big, white house.

But back in the kitchen it was more cheerful. The hired man had gone to Waverly, three miles off, and would stay there for supper. Colonel Westmoreland sat Bobby down in a corner, scratched his head in silent thought, and then heaped upon him, as amusement, three almanacs and a gigantic Bible. Following that, he tied a great white cloth tightly about his own waist, and set about the task of preparing a meal for two. Fifteen minutes later, he had

almost forgotten the existence of the little waif, when a whimpering cry from the doorway caused him to turn.

Bobby had lost interest in the allurements of the almanacs and the Bible, and was sitting on the doorstep, gazing out toward the changing sky. His mouth was drawn down in a pathetic little pucker. One pudgy hand, doubled and dirty, sought his eyes. The whimper turned to a whine. Colonel Westmoreland, forgetful of the possibilities of burned steak and scorched biscuit, rushed to the doorway, and hurried the little fellow into his arms.

"What's th' matteh, honey?" he crooned. "What's th' matteh?"

"I—want—muvver!"

"Well, well, well, yo' maw's in town, honey, yo' maw's in town. Come on now, let's eat a snack, an' then yo'll feel betteh. Come on now, come on."

But it failed to pacify. The pucker deepened, and the second hand went to meet the other at the fountains of tears. The colonel's eyes opened wide with pity and with wonder, and his soft words denoted, too, that within his heart there was an ache of sympathy for the tiny body he held in his arms.

Vainly he tried to tell the story of the babes in the woods. Vainly he sought by ridiculous grimaces to arouse the good humor of Bobby. For there was only one thing on earth that Bobby wanted, only one thing for which his whole being cried, and that was voiced in his one expression, repeated again and again and again:

"I—want—muvver!"

A tiny wisp of smoke arose from the oven, and grew to a baby cloud, unnoticed. The steak in the skillet became medium, and then well done, and finally curled into a roll of leatherlike toughness. The fire beneath turned from flames to red coals, and then to ashes, but all passed without heed, for far away from the kitchen, up in the big bedroom where the shadows of the oil lamp cast queer, grotesque reflections on the wall, a white-haired old man was rocking to and fro, to and fro, looking with infinite tenderness upon the little face that snuggled against his



"Pore little cuss!" he repeated under his breath. "Pore little cuss!"

breast, patting ever so softly now and then the baby body that shook with the sobs that only the longing for a mother can bring.

"Neveh yo' min', now; never yo' min'," the colonel said for the five hundredth time.

Some way, he could think of little else, and so, finally, from want of new ideas, he silenced his voice, and then began again, that the lonely cries of the one within his arms might not find such easy access to his heart.

Suddenly he stopped his rocking. What was that old song now? Surely he ought to remember—something about babies and sleep. He laid his head back against the crocheted tidy at the top of the rocking-chair, and began in a voice, high and cracked from the disuse of years:

Rock a-by, baby,
On the treetop;
When th' win' blows—

And there memory failed him. However, the melody still lingered, and so, closing his lips, he began to hum it over and over again. Gradually, as the cuckoo clock above the big fireplace announced the quarter and half hours, the sobs grew less frequent. Finally they stopped altogether. Another quarter of an hour, and the colonel ventured a look downward. The long lashes had drooped, the eyes were closed; Bobby was asleep.

Then came the ordeal of undressing, done in constant fear of the awakening that did not come. From the telescope that had accompanied Bobby on his arrival that morning, a nightdress was brought forth, and drawn over the sleep-laden body. Tiptoeing softly, the colonel crept with him to the great walnut bed, and tenderly placed the baby, like a little island in a great sea of white, under the coverlet. Fraction by fraction, as if even that might disturb

the sleeper, the white-haired one turned down the wick of the lamp until only the barest ray issued forth. Then, tiptoeing again, he carried the rocker to the side of the bed.

Daylight found him there, still awake, still turning anxiously every few minutes to see that Bobby was resting comfortably, that he was slumbering.

"Pore little cuss!" he repeated under his breath. "Pore little cuss!"

There was silence for a long, long time, and then:

"It'd been different thirty years ago." And once more the voice ceased as the colonel's eyes furtively sought the wall, and then turned back to the bed again. In the long night, he had come to a realization of the problem that was before him. The juggling of bumblebees, the catching of crawfish—all that was good enough for an older boy—but Bobby was only a baby, with a baby's ideas, and a baby's mind, and a baby's love for its mother. Perhaps if he had been older, things might have been different, but—

The cuckoo clock whistled the announcement of five, just as the sun's rays found the top of the window. Within a little more than an hour, the accommodation train would be wheezing into Waverly, and then in thrice that time it would be in the city whence the colonel and Bobby had come the day before.

Colonel Westmoreland tried to fight against something which kept thumping into his brain. Suppose he had come to love this baby within the last twenty-four hours, suppose he would, in after years, be able to give the child more advantages, and more pleasures, and a better chance in life—how about the little boy himself, and his tears, and his appeal: "I want my muvver!"?

Colonel Westmoreland stole another glance over his shoulder. Then he hurried out of the house, hitched the old mare to the buggy, stuffed some apples into his pockets, and made his way to the bedroom with the shouting announcement of:

"Heah, heah, Bobby, can't yo'-all heah

th' bihds a-twittihin' out theh, a-sayin': 'Wake up, wake up!' Come on heah, little man, we got to hurry to catch the train back to town! What yo' s'pose yo' maw'd say ef we missed the train?"

And it was a different Bobby entirely that laughed and tugged at the colonel's arms later that morning as they paused before a little house on a side street. At the door, the colonel's manners seemed to have deserted him, for he pushed it open without the formality of knocking, and entered the kitchen. A young woman, her face tired, yet pretty with a frailty that bespoke an entirely different beginning in life, turned from the ironing board with an ejaculation of surprise that became a cry of happiness as she rushed forward.

The colonel felt something very heavy and very hard in his throat, and for some reason he failed to make out the woman's features very clearly as she came toward him.

"Heah's yo' boy," he said, and then turned hastily away as the child slipped out of his arms.

He walked out into the sunlight again, and strode quickly down the street, dodging instinctively as he threaded his way along the sidewalk toward the station and the train that would carry him back to Waverly.

Suddenly he paused. He had forgotten something—what on earth could it have been? He should be carrying some object, a book or a newspaper or a bundle or—or—no, he remembered now; he had carried Bobby up from the station in his arms, and the memory still lingered, that was all.

Yet the colonel reflected, when he had seated himself in the dingy smoking car of the accommodation, had he not forgotten something? Would it not have been possible to have stopped on the way to the station, and ordered some toys to be sent out to the little house?

Children like toys, the colonel ruminated, and, turning back the years, he saw himself seated in the sunlight that streamed through a big bay window, sending armies of valiant lead heroes

to the slaughter of battle while a grinning "ole mammy" looked on. That was right, children did like toys.

Then, too, he wondered, were there enough groceries in the little house; was the rent paid; did she, the mother, have plenty of clothing, and did Bobby have all that could make him comfortable and happy? Assuredly not, and again the colonel's mind's eye began to see far past the swinging fields beyond the car window, back into the city again.

"Neveh thought o' thet!" he ejaculated to himself, with a heavy slap on the thigh. "Neveh thought o' thet, suh!"

"Lost something?" the fat drummer in the seat just ahead asked.

The colonel did not answer. He was very busily engaged in looking out of the window—at nothing.

Back in the old house again, he wondered why it was that his steps echoed so much more loudly than they ever did before, why it was, when he stood still, that the house was so silent, and yet so fraught with queer little nonexistent noises, why it was that he kept wishing, wishing for—he didn't know what. He glanced at the clock, and noticed that just fifteen minutes would elapse before the rural-delivery carrier would come by on his afternoon route. What should the check be for, fifty dollars, or one hundred?

The next day—the calendar assured him that it was not the next week—Colonel Westmoreland found himself wondering whether she had received the check, and what she had done with it.

"Thet boy ought to have some tin soldiers," he muttered over his biscuits and eggs; "he sho'ly ought to have some soldiers."

And the next day after that brought the same things, while the following one brought the discovery of Colonel Westmoreland again trudging the streets of St. Louis toward a certain little house, with a suspicious-appearing square bundle under one arm. It was hot and sultry as he walked, for the colonel hated street cars.

He paused now and then to mop his forehead with his big handkerchief, and to look in the store windows, always finding himself, by some strange bit of luck, in front of a place that displayed little jumper suits, and red caps, and big straw hats, all designed especially for a child of four.

He had just turned the last corner and was casting his inexperienced eye over one of the exhibits when there came the sound of shouts. A sprinkling cart was passing, and behind it a crowd of children, bathing their bare feet and legs in its cooling spray. Behind them, left in the lurch, but still struggling to keep up, toddled a familiar little figure that caused Colonel Westmoreland to start forward as if he had been shot.

In a second more he was in the street, and was lifting Bobby up to a smacking kiss. In another like passage of time, he was pushing open the door of the little house with less formality than ever. Again the woman at the ironing board started—but this time it was at the sight of an angry face.

"Looky heah!" the colonel exclaimed. "Looky heah! What do yo' mean by lettin' this heah boy play out in th' streets?"

"I was going to take him over to the playground in just a little while," the woman answered. "Won't you sit down?"

But the colonel, already forgetful of his anger, had issued that same invitation to himself, and with Bobby on his knee was displaying the mysteries of the bundle as the army in green tottered before the attack of the one in blue. The woman put up her ironing board, and turned to the stove. The colonel raised his head.

"Get thet check?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Yes what?" he demanded.

"I couldn't get anybody to cash it for me."

The resultant anger nearly spilled Bobby on the floor.

"Who wouldn't?" the colonel stormed. "Jes' let me at th' man that'll doubt Colonel Wes'mo'land, madam! Jes'——"

"Not you—me," the woman answered. "I shouldn't have taken it, anyway. You're hungry, aren't you?"

Fifteen minutes later, Colonel Westmoreland reached for his tenth biscuit.

"This beats mah cookin'," he grinned, "an' Ah thought Ah knew a little."

"I'm glad you like them," she said. "I was a little afraid of them when I saw you coming. It's the first time I've used this kind of flour."

"What kind yo' gen'ly use?" the colonel questioned, with a fine show of domesticity.

"Well, to be frank," she answered, "I haven't any especial brand. You see—Mrs. Douglas—I don't guess you know her—she keeps me stocked up in it. Her husband works in a mill. I bought this, though. Why, where's Bobby?"

"Heah he is," with a laugh, "undeh mah arm. Mrs. Kent—that's th' name, ain't it?" His voice became serious. "Ah don't know what Ah'm goin' to do 'thout this boy."

The answer was long in coming.

"Neither do I—still—I—well, I can't keep the two of us."

"Ah came nigh to cryin' when Ah had to bring him back, Ah——"

Then the colonel mentally kicked

himself, for he saw that the woman was doing exactly that of which he had spoken. She had turned, and was looking out the window toward the street, shielding her eyes as if from the light. A great deal of silence, punctuated now and then by the serious questions of Bobby, on the floor with his soldiers, followed. Then, all at once, the colonel wheeled in his chair, and brought his hand whacking down upon his thigh.

"By gravy!" he exclaimed, and then sank back in his chair again. "No, no—Ah reckon that wouldn't do, either. Yo' wouldn't think of it."

"Why—what?"

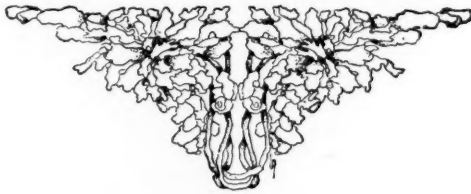
"Tain't no use—no use," the colonel insisted; "jes' a fool idea, that's all. Yo're too ol' fo' thet, anyhow."

"But——"

"Well"—he edged forward anxiously—"Ah was jes' thinkin' thet, s'posin' thet it was legal an' all thet sorta thing, what'd be th' matteh with me adoptin' both o' yo'? But a cose yo'——"

Again she was looking out the window, her hands shading her eyes, and murmured:

"Sometimes dreams *do* come true, don't they?"



Vanity

TO think that man, of all the hosts of earth,
Pretentious man alone, should bend the knee,
And cringe to caste, to coronets, to birth,
And brand himself with asininity!

What cares the cricket for ancestral halls?
Where is the prince a gnat would fear to sting?
An ant will scale the proudest castle walls,
A spider web the palace of a king!

RALPH M. THOMSON.

FISHING FOR MISS FOSTER

by EDWIN L. SABIN



ILLUSTRATED BY
LAURA E. FOSTER

MISS FOSTER was a—what shall I say? She was a Section 829 of the thesaurus kind of a girl. She was a delectable, charming, enticing, attractive, lovable, fascinating, sweet, and all-the-other-adjectives kind of a girl. She was a Queen of Sheba, and a Cleopatra, and a Du Barry, and a Langtry, and a Maud Muller, conglomerated and strained through a fine colander. She was a peach—and then some. She was an improved Burbank variety of peach, a nectarine grafted on a rose and a magazine cover by Fisher or Hutt.

But she isn't Miss Foster any more. Whereon hangs this tale.

There were nine of us this month at the clubhouse on our trout preserve: Mrs. Reynolds, who was chaperon; Miss Foster, who was her niece; Reynolds, who was Mrs. Reynolds' husband; Harris, Homer, Spicen, Rogers, and myself; and Burger, who was Reynolds' cousin, or something. Burger didn't fish; he wouldn't have known a trout from a bullfrog, but he knew all about Greek roots. Word roots, I mean, not edible roots. So I have isolated him in the category.

Of course, being the kind of girl

that she was, Miss Foster had a grand time here in a clubhouse a day from anywhere, with five eligible men and a chaperon somewhat fat. I say five eligible men, because Burger was a Greek rooter and not a normal girler. I don't believe that he even saw Miss Foster until after he had eaten with her three times a day for two weeks.

Well, Miss Foster had such a grand time with us five, and we all grew to be such an unhappy family, shut up so together evenings, that we worried Mrs. Reynolds. She rather blamed herself for having brought discord into this angling Eden, and finally she took Miss Foster to task.

"Ethel," she said. I got this later from Reynolds. "I want to know which one it is to be. Things have gone on this way long enough. The cook complains that the men sour the milk."

"Which one is to be what, auntie?" queried Miss Foster.

I should write "awntie"; she always put a "w" sound in when astonished. When I asked her to marry me, she said: "Oh, I cawn't, Mr. Smith." Otherwise I would stake my word that she hadn't been astonished at all.

"Which one, if any, you are to accept," continued Mrs. Reynolds firmly. "The cook declares that he has had to hide the butcher knife. I wanted it only this morning to dig violets with."

"But, awntie! I may not have a chawnce to accept anybody. What makes you think so? We are only friends; they are my chums."

Yet collectively, we, as individuals, had proposed to her twenty-one times in the past month, with myself doing the odd. Maybe she thought it was just practice for a combined moving-picture and phonograph show, but we were more desperate.

"I know that five men are terribly in love with you. I know what that means, my dear. I have been young myself, and I was not born married to Frank. The cook heard Mr. Homer proposing to you in the potato patch, where he broke down three vines with his knees. You ought not to have let him move about so. And I've seen knee prints—at least, I think they were knee prints—out in the dust of the arbor."

No doubt she had. Knee prints were as thick around the place as the prints



"Don't you dare come over here!"

of hobnailed waders. Not every knee print indicated a proposal; some in the garden were weeding prints. But forty-two did, though. That is, the twenty-one pairs.

Miss Foster blushed. Reynolds did not say so, but she must have, for she blushed easy and often. She was a blush blonde.

"I cawn't decide. Really, I cawn't, awntie. They are all nice to me, and I like them all."

"When I was your age," proceeded Mrs. Reynolds severely, "if I had had such opportunities"—"that was rather a slam on me," admitted Reynolds—"I would have made sure of *one*. Five



Don't you dare interfere!"

eligible bachelors, and no chance of a mistake!"

"Six," reminded Miss Foster. "You omit Mr. Burger. I like him best of all, because he's so queer."

"And because you can't have him, I suppose. You aren't a Greek root. We will say five. That is enough. Now, before you go home to your mother, Ethel, I want you to accept one of these young men. Mr. Smith is the least attractive, in looks or money"—Reynolds dwelt upon this reservation with much gusto, for Smith is I—"but even he will do. Besides your own future, we must regard the present, and we certainly cannot have the milk

soured and the butcher knife hidden. As soon as you have chosen, then the rest of the men will simmer down and go fishing, and we all can enjoy ourselves."

"If I could marry the five of them, or else take Mr. Burger, that would be very exciting," mused Miss Foster.

"Don't be absurd, Ethel," reproved her aunt. "This is no female Emporium"—presume she would have said Utopia, but she sometimes bogged down in her classics—"and you aren't a lady Henry the Eighth. One

will be, I am sure, from my own experience, all that you can handle."

"Then," quoth Miss Foster, with a thoroughbred toss of her head, "I'll marry the one who catches His Royal Nibs, and you can tell them so."

The big trout! This was a stunner. He lived in the hole at the second bend below the clubhouse, and was two feet long, and weighed four pounds. And in his wisdom he was about the coldest-blooded proposition that a fellow can run against. You can't coerce a big trout. He moves in a different stratum entirely, and unless he is wholly receptive of mood your appeals don't interest him. Not a bit.



"The cook heard Mr. Homer proposing to you in the potato patch."

Naturally we long had expected that Harris would bring His Royal Nibs to basket. Every big trout, like other strong characters, has his moments of weakness—and Harris is one of those lucky and compelling fishermen who can catch a mess of trout out of a heavy dew. But I have known a ten-year-old boy to fetch in the granddad of a stream, so there was a chance for us all, except Burger, who didn't seem to care. He was another cold-blooded proposition.

Accordingly, as true sports, we cheered the Foster ultimatum.

It was a week before we fairly got down to work; it required a week before the deluge of new kinds of flies, and floating baits, and invisible leaders began to flow in upon us. Homer even ordered a new rod, with a particularly complicated Adirondack name, and he generously offered poor old Burger his

discarded, common steel rod. But Burger, in a dazed way pawing it, hooked himself in the finger, and had to be cut loose.

Miss Foster bandaged the wound, and made so much ado over it that we almost hated inoffensive Burger as much as we did Harris, the lucky angler.

At a formal meeting of the Foster Fishing Fellowship—as Reynolds outrageously dubbed us—'twas decided that the contest must be under strict Marquis of Queensbury rules. At the meeting, Miss Foster was the guest of honor. Burger was among the also present. We declared and adopted that His Royal Nibs must be taken by a floating bait, such as a fly, and with rod and line, in sportsmanlike fashion. No trolling allowed, or spinner, or worms, or frog, or mouse, or other baited hook.

We had to make the rules stringent and well defined, for there were those in our number quite capable of damming the bend at each end, and baling it dry, and coralling His Royal Nibs with the hands!

For further equity, and at Miss Foster's own suggestion, we divided the fishing periods among us. His Royal Nibs was to be fished for from eight to eleven o'clock in the morning, and from three to six o'clock in the afternoon, and the bend was to be the private property of the man having his turn, and the rest of us were to keep away. There being five of us, this plan alternated morning and afternoon for each, and we drew cuts for the sequence in which we started out. Miss Foster herself engaged to be at the bend with every man during his period to see fair play.

Fancy fishing for an ornery, obstinate, unresponsive, unget-at-able trout, with the most wonderful girl in the world at your elbow, to be kissed as

soon as you had landed him! Fancy depending thus upon the whim of a goggle-eyed trout!

Harris would hook him unless we hooked him first, and the gamble was more harrowing than staking a last cent upon a world's championship baseball series.

I think that our happiest moments were in the evening, after the day's ventures were safely over with, and Miss Foster was making up to Burger—we were rather sorry for Burger, and so evidently was she—the harmless. When she was with Burger, a delightful sense of peace settled upon us, and when they wandered away, as occasionally they did, as if Greek roots were growing in the hills, we were glad.

Three weeks passed. His Royal Nibs was still in aqua pura, or semipura, and the strain was awful. We quite frequently saw him—or thought that we saw him, for a fellow fishing as hard as we each fished, with Miss Foster's presence inciting us, is apt to see things. Now, and again he made a swirl or a splash, or butted in lazy, arrogant, contemptuous way at the fly. When he had done this last, the other men always burned to know what fly it was, and the angler himself always lied. Miss Foster would tell, until we learned not to name the pattern for her.

It was in the midst of this strain that Burger decided to go a-fishing himself. If we couldn't catch the big trout, we didn't care to catch anything, and Henry, the cook, was waxing quite peevish over the lack of fish for him to fry in new ways. His appeals and threats seemed to touch Burger all of a sudden, and Mr. Greek Rooter resolved seriously to sally forth in rescue of the clubhouse larder. That was mighty good of Burger, we thought, and Miss Foster proffered herself as instructor and as caddy to carry the fish.

Burger borrowed Homer's old rod and tackle, which had been given him anyway, and donned a dinky golf cap. And they left right after lunch at noon.

As Burger was not a member of the Foster Fishing Fellowship, of course he was not eligible to fish at the bend

during hours. The time had practically been apportioned out; this was Harris' afternoon there, and Miss Foster volunteered that she would be present at the bend as usual by three o'clock, for Mr. Burger was sure that he would have had enough by that time. We were sure, too; enough fishing, although not enough fish, for trout angling is harder work than digging Greek roots, and from one o'clock to three is about the most unfavorable period for catching anything.

So we all waited good old Burger our indulgent blessings, and bade him Godspeed, and not to fall in. Then we relaxed, to smoke, care-free, until three o'clock.

The remainder of this narrative I get mostly from Harris, who—Miss Foster, and Burger as well, still being absent at two-forty—sauntered forth for the bend and His Royal Nibs.

When he drew near, from the opposite side—he was foxy that way, was Harris, and I think that a secret of his fishing success lay in the fact that generally he tried to fish a much-fished spot from a new direction—he heard excited voices, and it was evident to him that Miss Foster and Burger were at the bend, and fishing there.

By the hubbub they might have been catching whales or bumblebees, or an acute brainstorm, but when Harris got a view of the water, as well as of the bank beyond, he saw what was the matter: His Royal Nibs was feeding!

Have you ever witnessed a big trout feeding—breaking the surface now here, now there, essaying to fill himself with ridiculously inadequate insects, like an elephant swallowing peanuts, and again creating a commotion down below as he makes a swipe at some incautious underling? Trout don't feed all day; they customarily feed—or it appears that they customarily feed—for a couple of hours at a time, say in the morning, and toward evening; and then they are very busy. What impelled His Royal Nibs to choose the mid-afternoon to stock up in, we cannot yet imagine, unless he had got onto the Foster Fishing Fellow-

ship schedule and was sandwiching his lunches in between periods.

At any rate, here he was, actively at work and play, and regardless of the scenery; cavorting gayly like an overgrown calf in clover, clownish and wicked at once, exposing now his pointed snout, now his speckled side, and twice leaping with almost his whole sharky length above the gentle current. Oh, his unholy gambols were a sight, says Harris.

Meanwhile Burger, his spectacles crooked one way, and his dinky cap crooked the other, frantically urged on by flushed Miss Foster standing close or following him about, was hurling the line out over the pool with about the finesse of a fat woman throwing a baseball or a greenhorn driving six horses.

He and Miss Foster, as objects upon the bank, were as conspicuous as a Flatiron Building painted pink, and they therefore would have as much show of inveigling a wise old trout such as His Royal Nibs as of fetching up a sunken galleon. So Harris—he wasn't above it—sat down, under a spruce, to watch the sport. He did have a bit of an excuse, for 'twas nearly three o'clock.

"Catch him! Oh, can't you catch him?" was imploring Miss Foster.

"He won't bite," gasped Burger. "What's the matter with him? He won't bite."

"Try it again. Put it right in front of him."

"I do. I nearly hooked him in the eye. I wish—I could—drop it in his—mouth when he opens up. Look at that, will you!"

"Maybe you can slipnoose him over his head."

"That's it; rope him out if you can't club him to death," Harris felt inclined to call, as sometimes the whole line lashed across the water, and sometimes it looked as though Burger was casting the rod, too.

"If we only had some different flies!" lamented Miss Foster.

"This one is all that's left. There were three on, but I lost the other two."

And, perspiring, Burger wildly whipped the rod up and down, up and down, over the pool.

"We ought to have something red. Those weren't good flies, anyway," she declared. "There he is again! See him? Oh, dear! He's been rising for red, the last few days. Haven't you anything red?"

"Nothing except my nose," panted Burger. "I'll give him that, though."

"Wait," she exclaimed. "Lend me your knife, please. Keep on fishing, and don't you look around."

Burger kept on fishing; Harris looked. Miss Foster skipped behind a little tree, and, turning up her khaki skirt about a foot, cut a piece off her red petticoat. Maybe it wasn't a petticoat, but it was where a petticoat is when there is a petticoat, and it must have filled the bill of a petticoat. Being still a bachelor, I can't express myself very clearly. Only, it was a woolen something, next layer to the khaki, because I once overheard Mrs. Reynolds and Miss Foster talking over what to dress in when out in the open, and it was red, because Harris saw, and a sample of it was on the hook when they all came back.

"There!" she said, again at Burger's side. "We'll stick this on, right over the fly."

So they did, a shred of it; Burger rending at the morsel without a tremor, as if it might be a Greek root, and discarding to the brush the larger portion—discarding callously that for which five strong men I know of would have spilled blood. Harris looked on.

Burger threw out the new lure, line, and half the rod, as graceful as a hippopotamus making lace, and Harris glanced at his watch. And one of those instantaneous turns of fate occurred.

Sometimes fate works with the vacillation of a coy grass widow saying "Yes," and sometimes with the decision of a hornet concluding to sting. This was the hornet, and we were stung. I forget who it was that woke up to find himself famous, but I know that I've slept less than half a minute and was born, was acclaimed, and was

dead of old age all in that time. So Harris glanced at his watch, and when he glanced up history had been made within that brief instant. For His Royal Nibs had taken the hook, and the final chapter of the clubhouse struggle had been written and blotted.

Didn't I remark that all great characters have their moments of weakness? His Royal Nibs had just had his—and his last. He had been under the bank, resting, when sailing upon a flaw of wind the red contraption—the Foster Fly; you will note, in tackle lists, that it is a combination accredited to our club—had landed lightly right before his nose. Of course Burger had no intention of casting there; he had been aiming generally at the water. But His Royal Nibs, recognizing of what the fly was partially constructed, gallantly appropriated it as a souvenir. Who would not risk his life for such a gage?

There was a savage tug at the rod in Burger's unsuspecting hands, Miss Foster emitted a shriek of delight and excitement: "You've got him! Don't let him jerk away! Pull! Oh, pull!" A great crimson-spotted cylinder shot sheer above the surface just out from the bank, the line, vivified by some mysterious force beneath the water, sped through, across for the opposite shore, and Harris, springing into the view, cried sharply:

"Three o'clock. Cut that out, Burger! It's my pool, Miss Foster."

"Shut up! Ball's in play! No use to blow the whistle while ball's in play," yapped Burger, finding tongue. None of them had known that he was a footballist.

"Stay where you are, Mr. Harris! Keep away. Don't you *dare* come over here! Don't you *dare* interfere!" ordered Miss Foster, madly pursuing Burger as he was yanked hither and thither.

Harris subsided. As he expressed it—the beast—he sat back and watched His Royal Nibs make a fight for the rag!

A big trout such as His Royal Nibs, of German blood—he was a crimson-

spotted German—is not apt to leap like a rainbow, but with Teutonic tenacity he wallows deep, and hauls stoutly, and matches endurance against endurance. Consequently the pool was not "churned," as fictionists would say; it was not churned until Burger—but I am omitting important details. It was not churned, but from the tip of the bowed rod the line led down, taut as a fiddle string, swerving from side to side, while Burger's arm swayed with it.

"Keep the line tight!" implored Miss Foster. "Don't let him get away! Shall I help?"

"Not on your life!" warned Burger.

His spectacles were off, and so was his golf cap, but he was game, and some of the gameness was entering into his speech. A big trout at the end of a line would animate a mummy.

Being a straight pull, without strategy or jockeying, said Harris, it is a wonder that something aloof or aloft did not give way. Burger was valiantly braced, morally supported by Miss Foster, on the bank, pulling the one way, and surging about in the depths before His Royal Nibs was pulling in the other. But being a straight pull, His Royal Nibs tired the sooner, and now for an instant he rolled over at the surface—just showing himself, to be gone again like a lost soul at sight of the dread upper world threatening him. His hopes lay in those limpid fastnesses which had served him many a year.

"You're gaining on him," encouraged Miss Foster. "Don't let him loose!"

His Royal Nibs rolled more frequently.

"How'll I get him out?" gasped Burger.

"You'll have to catch hold of him by the gills. Don't try to lift him with the line. Bring him in close, so we can reach him."

His Royal Nibs was floating lax upon the surface, all his splendid kingly form limned against the amber which upheld him. He was panting as badly as Burger—his great gill covers opened and shut like the regular flutter of an

emperor butterfly's wings. Without ceremony, Burger began hauling him in, hand over hand, rudely, and His Royal Nibs, the red contraption—later the celebrated Foster Fly—stuck fast in his nose, suffered himself to be towed unresisting along, plowing now on his side, now feebly wagging in natural posture, back uppermost.

"I'll hold him; you lift him," instructed Miss Foster. "Give me the line. Put your fingers through his gills. They won't bite."

Burger obediently passed over the line and rod, and gingerly stooped—the bank here being about a foot high. 'Twas the finale of a human and animal tragedy. Harris said that even he had a twinge, over the clubhouse gang and His Royal Nibs being "done" so by a Greek rooter, and a girl, and a bit of red wool stuff.

But at touch of those hands profane—Burger's hands—His Royal Nibs, with a mighty last effort, recoiled. There was a sudden flurry, an exclamation—choked in the middle—from Burger, and a shriek from Miss Foster. The tether dangled idly in her grasp; the frayed leader had parted, His Royal Nibs was away, and Burger was in the drink.

Harris started forward, alarmed. He has some milk of charity in him. Miss Foster was extending over the churned water—here is where the churning comes in—the light fly rod, like a magic wand, and was conjuring: "Take it! Oh, please take it! Willis! Can you swim? Help! Help!"

Then from his dive Burger emerged, to sputter, as he staggered blindly: "Leave me alone, everybody. It's my fish. Which bank do I go to? I see."

And streaming more and more as the water grew shallower—it was but chest deep where he fell in—he forged for

the shore, hugging to his breast, with the grip of a half back at the goal, His Royal Nibs!

"You caught him! Oh, you *did* catch him!" chanted Miss Foster, dancing at the verge.

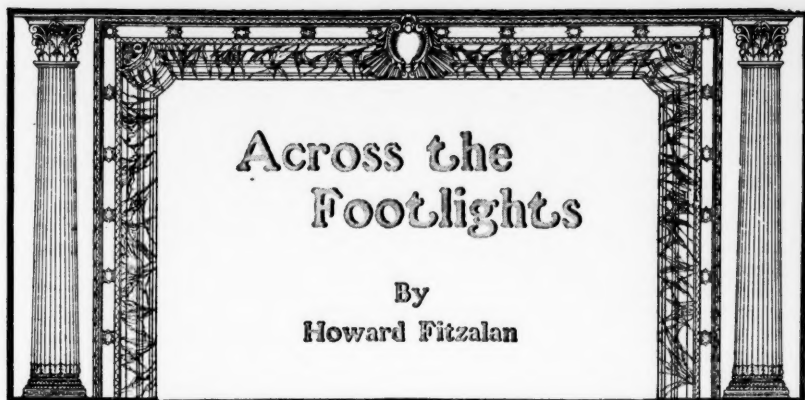
And as Burger climbed out to terra—what's the Latin for "dry," anyhow?—she tackled him; he dropped the ball, I judge, from what Harris, occupying the grand stand, says they tackled each other—and there between them lay His Royal Nibs, to flap and pant unheeded until Harris waded across below, and intruded to pick him up.

When the fated triumphal procession approached the clubhouse, Burger and Miss Foster were proudly leading the advance; Harris meekly trailed behind, carrying the fish. We all knew, but we didn't know all, until Mrs. Reynolds announced the engagement. I will admit that Harris was gentleman enough not to say a word about the kissing.

Well, it might have been worse. But several questions may be argued. Is a fish technically caught at the time he is hooked, or not until he is landed? Did Burger catch His Royal Nibs in his own—Burger's—time, before three o'clock, or in Harris' time, after three o'clock? Is a—er, red contraption, impromptu, like that was, a fly or a trolling device? And was Burger entered in the contest, anyway?

Miss Foster says that certainly he was. And Mrs. Reynolds insists absolutely that she knew they were in love with each other, from the very beginning! Then one may reasonably ask, what of that curious Royal Nibs proposition, which should have eliminated Burger? However, as Harris remarked, Burger *caught* him, didn't he? And when a woman will, she will, and you may depend on 't.





THEY love it," whispered William A. Brady to a corps of the First-night Brigade who sat in a rear row watching his star-revival production of that famous old thriller, "The Lights o' London."

"They pretend they're not taking it seriously," continued that astute manager when some one tittered at an heroic sentiment, "but just the same they love it. To-night they're laughing because they see the critics doing it, and they want to be in the swim, but just come here a few nights after this when the Broadway 'wise ones' are absent, and you'll hear no laughs."

I took him at his word, and found it good. A crowded house was listening intently and lachrymously. Only once did a serious line appeal to their risibilities, and that only because the newspapers had advertised it so insistently. It was one of Charles Richman's, who, foiled in his heavy work, cries out that he has been betrayed. All the other inconsistencies and impossibilities went unnoticed.

Mr. Brady's revival came at the right time, for it showed many managers that they had been, for many years, overlooking one species of entertainment that the public will ever adore, no matter how badly it is done. The word "melodrama" has been confused for so long a period with these attractions

seen in the cheaper houses that I hesitate to apply it to the class of plays I mean. I suppose every one knows that the real definition of "melodrama" is "drama with music," and it finally attached itself to a highly exciting type of play because such plays always had written into their stage direction what are termed "music cues," the orchestra playing certain bars of music at exits and entrances of principal characters and at the "curtains" of acts; the music intensifying the particular emotions the playwright had sought to express with his lines.

Melodramas, then, so called, are only plays with musical accompaniment. Following this definition, "Everywoman" is a typical melodrama, for, besides having the music, it does another thing that melodramatists insist upon—it strives to satisfy the eye first, the ear afterward; it has many gorgeous scenes, thronged with people splendidly dressed. Another requirement of melodrama that "Everywoman" fulfills is that it appeals to all within us that is primitive.

The stirring plays of Shakespeare—"Hamlet," "Macbeth," "Othello," et al—are melodramas, for a tragedy is only a melodrama with a tragic finish.

But in late years our superior folk have been using the word "melodrama" as a term of reproach.

The reason lies in the fact that when this type of play was at its height—about the time “The Lights o’ London” was produced—the habit began among managers of contriving certain spectacular sets of scenery and having stage carpenters write words around them. To this class belongs “The Lights o’ London,” the name and idea of which were quite patently inspired by an illustration in “Oliver Twist,” captioned in these very words and showing London Bridge. One can conceive a manager telling Mr. George R. Sims to write a play around a third-act set showing London town alight behind the great bridge. Quite obviously there was no need to have a bridge and water under it, unless somebody dived over the rail and saved somebody else, and who but the hero could do that? Whom should he save? The heroine? Well, that had been done so many times. Now, Jerome K. Jerome says some people if they had to make a new and “original” world would simply reverse everything in this one; to such people it would be “original” to walk on one’s hands instead of one’s feet.

George R. Sims belongs to this type of “originalists.” No saving the heroine for him. He would have the hero save—not the villain, because he must still be foiled in Act IV.—but the subvillain, thus heaping coals of fire on his head, and having him repent and help the plot.

There is a cartoonist who invented a series of pictures called “Foolish Questions.” He must add to the list the one the heroine asks the hero as he strips off his coat in response to a call for help from a drowning man.

“What are you going to do?” she screams.

Instead of the hero replying in a bored way that he is going for a walk on the river, the hero, having not a God-given sense of the ludicrous, but a Sims-given handicap that permits him to recognize humor only when the “low-comedy” characters speak, replies without a snicker:

“To save a human life.”

No doubt Mr. Sims put in the “hu-

man” lest the audience might think he was risking his neck for a dog or a cat.

Mr. Sims is a dull person. He still writes for one of the London weeklies under the name of “Dagonet,” and the lower middle classes rank him with Shakespeare. To the better classes he is known only as the proprietor of a hair renewer called “Tatcho”; you can see it advertised on all the omnibuses going to Brixton, Clapham, Popham, and Tooting.

Let no one ever tell you that “The Lights o’ London” was a “good play in its time.” Soliloquies and asides I make allowances for, as portions of a style of playwriting now abandoned; these I do not hold against Mr. Sims; only the commonplace plot which he did not have the ingenuity to make even credible. To say “The Lights o’ London” was good in its time is to insult the intelligence of a public that had been reading Thackeray, Dickens, and George Eliot for twenty years or thereabouts before its production. This good-in-its-time stuff is revolting trash. Were Plato and Marcus Aurelius “good in their time”?

It is a common fallacy with us to reckon ourselves gaining in intelligence as we acquire more convenient means of traveling, lighting, and bathing, but a savage out of the Congo Free State can be taught to press an electric push button in two seconds—a fact we seem to overlook. Napoleon lived in an age of candles, but I doubt, after reading his life, that the average Harlemiter is going to be filled with any great sense of superiority over the Corsican, because he, the Harlemiter, knows how to start an electric fan and the emperor of the French didn’t.

No, “The Lights o’ London” and others of an equal lack of quality succeeded because at that period there were no men of any literary gift writing for the stage; and, unless the public wanted to see revivals of the classics continually, they had to take the best they could get. True, Ibsen was shedding faint luminosity in those days, but what manager would have dreamed of producing him?

Ibsen and his school have had their day, have established their cult of true disciples who will ever go on, venturing into the psychological drama, but the main portion of the public remained untouched. The disciples of Ibsen banished the soliloquy and the unreality of mechanics, but, also, they banished what is known as the great "heart interest." The Ibsenites and the Shavians were not concerned with men's bodies, but with their souls; they did not care anything about their hearts; they wanted to appeal to their intellects. Now, the highest class of intellect is satisfied with a philosophy, but for the public in general you must dress up that philosophy so that they can understand it, and call it religion; then and then only will they obey its dictates.

All this apropos of the fact that the public is tired of the small-cast play with its one or two rooms for scenes; the dissecting of the emotions of very small—though very human—folk over matters more or less trivial. They want their big effects again, their crowded stages, their heroic deeds, and Homeric treatment, their religion, in fact. Philosophers who are not comedians are going to have a poor time of it this coming season if they are in the play-writing business.

"H. M. S. PINAFORE."

But if we have progressed in the making of dramatic plays and comedies, we have gone back considerably from the mark set by the never-to-be-forgotten team of W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan in the making of musical plays; and any one who thinks all this praise of Gilbert and Sullivan is founded on a fallacy had only to witness the brilliant revival at the Casino, with one of those star casts that we get about this time of the year. De Wolf Hopper, Marie Cahill, Louise Gunning, Eugene Cowles, Arthur Aldridge, and George MacFarlane were its chief interpreters; and, as it often happened, the two latter named people, as *Ralph Rackstraw* and *Captain Corcoran*, respectively, far outshone their

better-known fellow players. It seemed a pity the revival had not been made at the beginning of the season, instead of the end of it, for I feel sure that it would have lasted for the entire theatrical year. Incidentally it had the best singing male chorus I have ever heard on Broadway.

PAST PERFORMANCES.

With "Pinafore," the season came to an end; there is left only Ziegfeld's "Follies" on the New York Roof, and that is better classified as a vaudeville entertainment than one coming within the legitimate scope of a dramatic critic. It is therefore time to let out-of-town readers of SMITH'S know something about the shows that will probably reach them next year; those on which New York has set the seal of approval sufficiently for their managements to continue to present them. To say much of "The Concert," "Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford," "Baby Mine," "The Country Boy," "Madame Sherry," "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm," "Nobody's Widow," "The Gamblers," "Pomander Walk," and others, is futile; the success of these plays has been heralded broadcast, and when their "paper" goes up in any other city, a line will immediately form at the box office. It is with the plays not so well known that we have to do, and, although many have been taken from the boards and will never see "the road," it was not always because the play was not worthy.

One such was "The Brass Bottle," the second production of the season of 1910-1911; its failure was due to the facts, first, that not sufficient attention was paid to the magical illusions of the piece, and, second, because Richard Bennett, excellent actor that he is, is not a light comedian, and that was what the leading part, for which he was cast, called for.

"The Marriage of a Star," written in collaboration by the author of "Madame X," owed its lack of success to a peculiarly French viewpoint which was untranslatable, although Clara Lipman gave a brilliant performance as

the "star"—in this case the word has a double meaning.

For the failure of "Bobby Burnit," made into a play by Winchell Smith from G. R. Chester's stories, no reason can be assigned; there doesn't seem to be any. It was an agreeable commercial fairy tale, and well acted and produced; even the critics were favorable, but the public stayed away.

"Miss Patsy," in which Gertrude Quinlan aspired for stellar honors, was a pointless, aimless sort of farce, which would not have succeeded even with a well-known star, and, although Miss Quinlan gave a good performance, in my opinion she is not the stuff that stars are made of, either.

This brings us up to September first, during which time there had been other failures, and "The Commuters," "Baby Mine," "Madame Sherry," and "The Country Boy," all enormously successful. About that time John Drew started his regular season with a Somerset Maugham comedy, "Smith," a very agreeable and sensible affair, which lasted for one hundred performances before it went from the Empire. Jules Eckert Goodman's play, "Mother," appealed to fairly large audiences during its stay in New York, but "Anti-Matrimony," a Percy Mackaye satire used by Henrietta Crosman, failed to share its luck, although a better play. September was also distinguished by the production of "The Blue Bird" and "Alma Where Do You Live," the latter succeeding in spite of a bad libretto because of Jean Briquet's delightful music.

"The Girl in the Taxi" created a mild sensation, and October finished up with Charles Klein's "The Gamblers," a good melodrama. "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm," most charming of child stories, and "The Concert," so well done that one does not realize it is risqué, bobbed up for attention during October, and stayed the season out.

Pinero gave fresh proof of his matured talents in "The Thunderbolt," a critical study of the English middle classes, excellently played by the New Theater company. "Mr. Preedy and

the Countess," an R. C. Carton play used as a vehicle by Weedon Gro-smith, failed to duplicate its London success at the Thirty-ninth Street Theater, but through the fault of the public only. "Getting a Polish," a much inferior farce-comedy, succeeded down at Wallack's through the efforts of May Irwin; the piece was unworthy of both those excellent writers, Booth Tarkington and Harry Leon Wilson—was, in fact, more like an earlier work of George M. Cohan.

Blanche Bates scored the comedy triumph of her life in "Nobody's Widow," produced by Belasco the following week, another all-season success to be accredited to Avery Hopwood, who, the season before, had half the royalties of "Seven Days." Charles Millward was a fair "Sherlock Holmes" in the new dramatic adventure of that gentleman, "The Speckled Band," which proved too gruesome for an evening's entertainment. "The Girl and the Kaiser" must be ranked with the most charming of all the season's musical plays, and Lulu Glaser, to everybody's surprise, supplemented her comedy work with some excellent pathetic moments. "The Nest Egg" established Zelda Sears as a star; it was in the Mary E. Wilkins style, detailing quaintly some episodes in the life of a village dressmaker. November closed with Liebler & Co.'s magnificent production of a magnificent play, Maurice Maeterlinck's "Mary Magdalene."

"Two Women" must be regarded as a vehicle for Leslie Carter rather than a play; taken on its merits, it is very bad, but those who admire her volcanic eruptions, her unreal pathos, and the type of scarlet woman she plays, will no doubt deem it a masterpiece. "Daddy Dufard" was another vehicle; this one for Albert Chevalier. He is better as a vaudeville headliner.

"The Foolish Virgin" failed for two reasons: First, because Charles Frohman's stage director gave it a stock-company production; second, Mrs. Patrick Campbell was miscast in the part of a modest and forgiving wife. There was some bad acting in "The

Foolish Virgin"; not one of the cast realized their opportunities. The play itself was excellent. "Pomander Walk," by Louis N. Parker, an Old World romance of the early nineteenth century, was utterly charming and will live long; and the same description and prophecy "go for" "The Spring Maid," which firmly settled the question as to whether or not Christie MacDonald was a star. May she get another vehicle as worthy as this one! "Suzanne," a tale of the Belgian bourgeoisie, gave Billie Burke a typical Billie Burke part, but not much else; and the play that closed the old year, "We Can't Be As Bad As All That," failed, no man knows why. It was written in Henry Arthur Jones' best vein, and well acted. I presume it was a bit old-fashioned and obvious, but those are the harshest criticisms that can be brought against it.

BEGINNING THE NEW YEAR.

Two new writers, Philip H. Bartholomae and H. S. Sheldon bobbed up for commendation with "Over Night" and "The Havoc" respectively, both of which received their meed of critical and popular approval. "The Deep Purple," by Wilson Mizner and Paul Armstrong, came to the Lyric after a Chicago run, and duplicated its success here; in it there is some excellent characterization of the people of the underworld. "The Faun," by Edward Knoblauch, pleasant, though not novel, gave William Faversham some fantastic moments. The supernatural from the serious standpoint was exemplified in "The Scarecrow," by Percy Mackaye, one of the most commendable productions of the season, in the title rôle of which Frank Reicher distinguished himself. That "The Scarecrow" should have failed is the New York public's shame. Perhaps it will find more intelligent auditors on the "road." Every one knows about the success of "Naughty Marietta," and "Chantecler" was as much of a sensation as expected, was magnificently staged and costumed by Mr. Frohman, and as quaintly played by Maude Adams as her ad-

mirers could desire, but nevertheless I shall go to my grave declaring that the more charming the woman the less qualified she is to play a part which is the apotheosis of masculinity. Otis Skinner, who every one seemed to think should have played "Chantecler," opened the following day in a polyglot thing called "Sire," which nobody liked, and that was the end of January.

Josephine Preston Peabody's poetic play founded on the old legend of Hamelin town, "The Piper," gave February an agreeable start, and gained the New Theater much praise; it was, next to "The Blue Bird," Mr. Winthrop Ames' best selection for the year's repertoire. "The Boss," by the author of "The Nigger" and "Salvation Nell," proved an excellent vehicle for the exploitation of Holbrook Blinn's histrionic talent; the character of *Michael Regan*, revolting in many ways, was nevertheless an excellent bit of character drawing, and the play, though crude, gripped.

"The Balkan Princess," with its dainty music and appealing love story, duplicated at the Casino the success it had at the Prince of Wales Theater in London, and Louise Gunning proved in it her right to be a star. In "Excuse Me" friends of Rupert Hughes were glad to find that this author had at last struck the popular note; he has done better things for the stage, but none that the public has liked so much. "The Twelve-Pound Look," a Barrie playlet, presented by Ethel Barrymore in connection with her revival of another Barrie play, "Alice-Sit-By-the-Fire," added to the whimsical moralist's high literary reputation. "Seven Sisters," adapted from the Hungarian by Edith Ellis, pleased many in New York and more in Chicago; although Charles Cherry was technically its star, Laurette Taylor, who is very nearly America's greatest light comedienne, gathered all the laurels in the leading feminine part. "The Arrow Maker," Mary Austin's poetic drama of Indian life, was a spectacular success at the New Theater.

The month of March ushered in a

success for John Mason, who has another success as great as "The Witching Hour" in a play by the same author, "As a Man Thinks." Augustus Thomas shows all his technical skill in the making of this piece of theatrical bijouterie; such productions should convince England we have some playwrights who know a thing or two. "Thais," from Anatole France's novel by Paul Wiltach, pleases the eye, and the cadences of its semiblack verse soothe the ear. I doubt, however, if the great novel's psychology is in the play. "The Pink Lady" was the best out-and-out musical comedy of the year, for I regard "The Balkan Princess" and "The Girl and the Kaiser" more as romantic plays set to music, and "The Hen-Pecks" the best extravaganza—the annual Lew Fields musical mélange, combining burlesque, pantomime, etc., with Mr. Fields' usual accuracy.

"Mrs. Bumpstead-Leigh" was the first April production; Mrs. Fiske hardly needed her ripe experience to score in the leading part, which was theatrically effective. The author, Harry James Smith, shows promise. "Little Miss Fix-It," "Doctor De Luxe," and "A Certain Party" all fell short of success, although "Doctor De Luxe" was, in my opinion, a rather

pleasing musical play. They introduced three new stars, Nora Bayes, Ralph Herz, and Mabel Hite. With the proper vehicles, this trio have every right to the coveted name of star. "An Old New Yorker" had the short run of a week; it deserved more consideration, although the authors were guilty of criminal carelessness in the closing act; it could have been made a very fine play.

Then there were the big shows at the Folies Bergere and the Winter Garden, both appealing to the eye, and introducing new types of theaters to New York. One smokes and drinks in both, and in the Folies Bergere one has dinner and supper. The supper show, beginning at eleven-thirty, has made the Folies Bergere a New York institution. Not to have attended it is not to be a typical New Yorker.

Speaking generally of the season, it has not been a good one. Except for the last-mentioned palaces of pleasure, no particularly new thing has been brought to light; there have been few great popular successes and fewer really worthy plays produced this season.

The managers say they are going to change all that during the season of 1911-1912. Let us believe them.



The Trail of the Sheridan Heir

By Virginia Middleton

ILLUSTRATED BY SIGURD SCHOU

III.—THE AFFAIR OF THE NIGHT RAIDERS

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING PARTS

Gerald Cromartin, the son of a Dublin barrister, is sent to the United States to discover the whereabouts of a certain Peter Sheridan, who went there many years before and who is now the heir to large estates. If Sheridan is no longer living the property goes to a niece, Nora Braisted. On the way to Montreal, Gerald meets a charming young woman, Kathleen Fletcher, and also a jeweler of Denver named La Shelle, and his wife. Mrs. La Shelle asks Gerald to deliver a small package to her sister in New York. Miss Fletcher sees him receive this package. On the frontier Gerald is stopped by United States customs officers, under suspicion that he has been made a dupe of by the La Shelles, and is smuggling pearls. Nothing dutiable, however, is found in the package. Gerald concludes from what seems good evidence that Miss Fletcher was his accuser. He goes to New York, and on the way there is mistaken by a leader of anarchists for a foreign prince, is kidnaped, and taken to Paterson. When it is being deliberated as to what shall be done with him, Miss Fletcher appears, shows the anarchists their mistake, and obtains Gerald's release.

TO the patriotic ire of a citizen of that empire upon which the sun never sets, subjected to outrage in a supposedly friendly foreign port, Mr. Cromartin added the personal resentment of a young man unaccustomed to rebuffs from the fair toward a young woman who seemed bent upon treating him with animosity. Animosity? Persecution! The fact that Miss Fletcher had really appeared in the rôle of his liberator at that last encounter did not induce Gerald to alter the word. It had been she who blunderingly, unkindly, treacherously delivered him up to the asinine customs inspectors. She had been the ally, the important, commanding member of his scatter-brained captors of Paterson. What kind of woman was she to be mixed up with madmen and with spies, with sneaks, with men of disreputable calling? Thus Mr. Cromartin, in his fine wrath, designated all secret-service officers of all governments whatever. What sort of woman was she?

"I beg pardon, sir?" murmured the astonished water at the Plaza, who was placing before the hungry traveler from Great Britain a late supper; and then

Gerald realized that in his absorption over the indignities he had suffered, and the person whom he charged with being responsible for them, he had asked the waiter what sort of a woman she was.

"On the contrary," replied Gerald, coming to himself, "I beg yours."

"Thank you, sir," the waiter answered gratefully, and Gerald attacked his oysters with a pleasant sense of gustatory adventure.

The supper room was crowded with theater parties, and with other hungry humans. It was an agreeably brilliant scene, beautifully lighted, well dressed, merry, in a take-it-for-granted fashion; of course one is well dressed; of course one is well fed; of course one is entertaining and entertained; why else does the world exist? That was the atmosphere of the gay room, that the atmosphere that emanated from the sparkling, richly gowned women, the immaculate, prosperous men.

Gerald was no philosopher, and no political economist. But before his eyes, as he surveyed this pleasant prospect, there flashed a vivid photograph of the faces that had threatened him a few hours before—the hungry, eager, avid



"And so the case of Peter Sheridan is up again."

faces; the poor clothes, the dirt, the vehement fanaticism. They touched a chord, made an appeal, now, that they were powerless to make when he had actually beheld them. And between the two scenes, the actual one and the remembered one, floated the face of the girl.

He eyed the women about him critically. Some were sleekly beautiful, all, he thought, were "smart," all were vivacious. But not one, it seemed to him, had her distinction of look and bearing; and yet, he supposed, if she came in here now, she would not attract a second glance from these men and women. Hers was a spiritual distinction, and these people had not eyes for things of the spirit. Then he pulled himself sharply up—was he actually permitting himself to forget how abominably she had treated him? Was he actually becoming such a purblind fool as to attribute some rare quality to a girl who consorted with cheap, stupid

spies and with madmen? He finished his coffee in a gulp, and strode to the elevator.

When he had reached the shelter of his room for the second time that evening without personal mishap, he laughed.

"The elevator man was not a disguised brigand; and, so far, the cook hasn't been proved a poisoner! My room seems free from hidden assassins." He had switched on the lights, and looked swiftly into wardrobe and bathroom. "The telephone connection seems to be all right, and perhaps the spell is broken for the time. I shall probably be awakened before morning and haled before a magistrate on a charge of murder or arson; but meantime I'm going to sleep."

He was as good as his word; and, in spite of the excitements of his few hours on American soil, he slept the deep sleep of the youth of good digestion and easy conscience; and it was

with the fresh, rested, vigorous look that best became his ruddy blondness that he presented himself the next morning in the offices of Messrs. Hamidge & Jay.

The quarters which this eminent firm occupied caused Gerald some astonishment as he waited in an anteroom. He had been firmly convinced that all the United States resounded to the clatter of typewriter keys and glistened with freshly polished mahogany and nickel. And here he found himself in a somnolently quiet, old-fashioned, low, rather dingy office building on a narrow downtown street. The elevators moved languidly instead of shooting up and down. He could see, through an open door, some clerks actually writing by hand.

The room in which he waited was as shabby as his father's private office in Dublin—and the elder Mr. Cromartin had resolutely set his face against fresh furnishings for a quarter of a century. The oak table was dull, the big oak and cane chairs were dull; there were cases of shabby calfskin books about the walls; and an ancient ice-water cooler on a stand in one corner. A somewhat discolored steel engraving, celebrating, with much smoke, an early American naval victory, in which one of Mr. Hamidge's ancestors was engaged, hung on one wall. Opposite it was the Declaration of Independence in a tarnished gilt frame.

This was certainly very unlike what Gerald had pictured an American lawyer's office to be; and he began to inquire of himself whether Hamidge & Jay had the standing at home which he had always been led by his father and the older members of his firm to believe.

His apprehensions were set at rest when the office boy, who was of the same general hue as the office, returned and led him into Mr. Hamidge's private room. It was no more elaborate or new than the waiting room, or than the rooms off the corridor through which he had passed to reach it. But as soon as he set eyes upon the leonine head of old Mr. Hamidge, he knew that his fa-

ther had been right. Here was a great man, a leader, a man made for achievement. Beneath the thick black eyebrows sparkled gray eyes that seventy years had not dimmed of their fire. Under the thick thatch of white hair loomed the great forehead of a master.

"And so," said the old lawyer when greetings were over, and all his friendly inquiries made for Gerald's family—it would flatter his mother that she was remembered so accurately after more than twenty years—"and so the case of Peter Sheridan is up again. Some men are born to make business for us, it seems; but I thought we were done with Peter."

"You have actually seen him?" said Gerald.

"Yes—oh, yes. I suppose it seems to you a little like setting out on a search for a character out of 'Bullfinch's Mythology.' I'm not sure myself that that would not be as profitable a task. However, of course, the search must be undertaken. Peter Sheridan was exactly the sort of man to make trouble, dead or alive; and the Braisted's must be secured in the possession of the estate and the title. Romantic story that of the baronetcy, isn't it?"

"Very—with especial thanks to Peter Sheridan, I should say. If it weren't for the doubt about him and his heirs, the whole thing would be plain sailing for Lady Nora Braisted."

"A young woman, they tell me?"

"A mere girl, and a charming one, whom riches will become mightily."

Gerald took his own emotional temperature as he spoke; it was particularly reassuring; he was glad, very glad, indeed, that he had not yielded to the impulse to kiss her good-by. "Kisses complicate a simple situation," he told himself sagely.

"Her husband is a man of wealth, is he not?" asked Mr. Hamidge. "Of course, he would be! Have you ever noticed with what unflinching regularity the large inheritances fall to the owners of large fortunes? That is one thing which convinces me we will discover Peter Sheridan to be dead without lawful issue. The Braisted's don't need the

money—therefore it's a foregone conclusion that it will fall to them!"

He pressed a button as he spoke, and a second dust-colored office boy—by his looks an older brother to the one of the anteroom—appeared.

"Jerry, the files on the case of Peter Sheridan."

In a few moments Jerry returned with two great letter books. Mr. Hamidge opened them; and there, carefully mounted on tough paper, Gerald saw copies of all the communications in regard to Peter Sheridan. The originals were in the other book, "where they are not subjected to the wear of handling," said Mr. Hamidge.

"You know the situation, of course. Peter Sheridan was a remittance man. We were to give him, upon his personal appearance in our offices once a quarter, a certain sum of money. Let me see—it was a hundred and fifty dollars—thirty pounds of your money. It was not a fortune; but I fancy it was not a small share of his father's income. And, of course, if he husbanded it at all carefully, it was enough to keep him from starvation. Here is the photograph of him that was sent over with our instructions in regard to him."

Mr. Hamidge handed Gerald a cabinet-sized photograph, on whose yellowing surface the handsome, sullen features of a young man were growing pale. Gerald studied the face long and carefully. The short, thick hair was brushed up from the high forehead in the "stove-brush" fashion of a former period. The eyes were deep-set; the well-cut lips curved downward in a look of anger or resentment.

"This is the latest picture of him that you have?"

"The only one. I think that Sheridan didn't help the photographers' business any. The kind of vanity that loves to see its features reproduced was not one of his defects, I think. Well, he appeared here upon the date mentioned in the letters from your father's firm—your firm, also, and one on your connection with which I congratulate you—and drew his first allowance. To tell you the truth, he did not impress me so

unfavorably as I had expected. But then, of course, he wasn't my son, and I could endure his characteristics with more equanimity than if he had been. What this generation calls a 'grouch' against the universe seemed to be his prevailing mood; about his carousals I know nothing. I heard of them, of course; but whenever I saw him he was sober enough. That was only three times. He came the second quarter day and drew his hundred and fifty dollars, and the third. To my questions as to his place of habitation and his occupation he returned rather impertinent answers, though I had no desire except to be of some service to him. I couldn't help feeling that it was living in the wrong environment, among unsympathetic people, that had harmed him. However, he didn't take kindly to my interest, and I didn't pursue him with it. He never reappeared after the third quarter day. When the fourth had passed, I wrote to your father, and got old Sheridan's instructions. They were of the Spartan variety—the money was to be paid to Peter, appearing in person, on a given date of four specified months a year. If he did not appear on those occasions, the father, Patrick Sheridan, intimated that he had plenty of use for the money himself. Peter never turned up again. After five or six years, the old man weakened a little in his part of the Roman parent, and instructed us to make search for his son."

Mr. Hamidge busied himself with some papers, and, sorting them, handed them to Gerald.

"One of our clerks of that period, an Irishman, too—a gifted fellow, but as erratic as they're made—had had more intercourse with Peter Sheridan than I was allowed to have. It seems that they both belonged to a Young Ireland organization, or a chapter of the Clan-na-Gael, or one of those orders with which you people are in the habit of striking terror into the British lion. The strangest race, yours, Cromartin—if you'll excuse me. But I am digressing. Rourke, the clerk of whom I am speaking, when he heard that old Sheridan was inquiring about his son after the lapse of a

few years, told us all he knew. It wasn't much; merely that for nearly a year Peter Sheridan had been one of the most ardent members of the organization—here is its name and the address of the place where it held its meetings in—eighteen eighty and eighteen eighty-one—is it? And that Peter had a glorious and perfectly practicable scheme—Rourke swore with tears in his eyes that it was practicable—for annexing Canada. It was to fit himself for leadership in that sane and orderly undertaking that he put himself for a while under the tutelage of a Colonel Hardy, an adventurer who sometimes held commissions from South American dictators, and who used to run arms and ammunition into the hands of rebels who weren't supposed to have them. Well, we got on the trail of Hardy, and found him; fever and rheumatism had twisted his poor old joints together, and he was living on next to nothing in a shanty up on Amsterdam Avenue—it was before the day of the steel-structure apartment house; but I forget that you don't know Amsterdam Avenue."

"But I want to," declared Gerald.

Mr. Hamidge smiled, and shook his head.

"Believe me, you don't!" he answered. "Well, the Sheridan trail did not lead in that direction long. It was there that we found the broken-down filibuster, to be sure, living with the old mother of one of his comrades, who had been killed in Ecuador. But all that he could do was to complain that the world had treated him badly, that republics—South American especially—were ungrateful, that men were disloyal, and that among the most disloyal was Peter Sheridan. The ground of the charge against Peter seemed to be that he had actually cleared a little money on some of his contraband goods, and had gone into stock raising in Kentucky, at a place called Bluevale. It is not far from Lexington—not the Lexington with which you are, perhaps, more familiar, but a place famed for good horses, pretty girls, and excellent whisky, and not for having anything to do with the cradle of liberty."

"Stock raising in the blue-grass region seems to be a tame ending for such a fire eater as our Peter began by being," said Gerald, not unwilling to let the older man see that he knew his American geography fairly well.

"It doesn't seem to have been the end of our fire eater," replied the lawyer. "Of course, we employed agents to investigate the land records and to interview the inhabitants of Bluevale; but we found nothing that seemed to have the slightest connection with Peter Sheridan. Here are the lawyers' and detectives' reports. Look them over."

Gerald looked them over. According to them, Bluevale denied all knowledge of Peter Sheridan.

"Perhaps your adventurer—the filibustering one—may have mistaken the name of the region in which Peter Sheridan purposed to become an honest stock raiser, leaving the British lion in peace?" suggested Gerald.

"It is quite possible. It occurred to us also; and, when we had these reports from Bluevale, we sent up to Colonel Hardy to try to stir his memory along some new line. But he had died in the meantime."

"So that was the end of the search?" said Gerald musingly.

"That was the end of the search. Old Patrick Sheridan told us not to spend any more money. He had had a dream showing him Peter killed in a drunken brawl; and it seems the vision fitted in so well with his own forebodings that he accepted it as authoritative. This is the first reopening of the matter since."

Gerald still held the old, boyish photograph. He studied it with a baffled sense of familiarity.

"I may have a copy made of this?" he asked.

"Certainly. And may I recommend to you the best firm of detectives to employ on this sort of work?"

"Of course, I shall be obliged to you for any recommendations. And I suppose you will think me a flighty sort of person when I tell you that I am going, for a little while, at least, to be my own detective?"

The older man shook his head.

"It is better to specialize," he said. "No one of us can be everything. To be one's own detective usually means merely wasted time and a bad tangling of clues. However, when you are ready for expert assistance, these are the men to give it to you." He wrote, in his neat, platelike hand, upon a card, and handed it to Gerald. "Where will you begin your investigations?"

"In Bluevale," replied the young man.

"Thank you very much," replied Gerald heartily. "But may the invitation hold over? I feel a tremendous rush of energy—it's the climate, I suppose—and I want to get off on this Sheridan business at once. When I come back from Bluevale, may I pay my respects to Mrs. Hamidge and your daughters, and convey my mother's remembrances to them?"

"You are an enthusiast, indeed. Of



"Won't you please say that it was thrown into the room just now, and that you picked it up?"

Mr. Hamidge smiled a tolerant, elderly smile, but made no further objection to Gerald's course.

"My family is still in the country, at Garrison," he said to the young man. "I run up and down almost every day. You will let me take you out with me to-night, and will stay over Sunday with us? Mrs. Hamidge and my daughters are expecting it. Mrs. Hamidge remembers with as keen pleasure as I do our visit to your father's place in—eighty-six, I think it was."

course, we shall all be glad to see you when you return—with Peter Sheridan in chains to grace the triumph. At any rate, you'll lunch with me at the Century to-day?"

Gerald accepted this invitation, and was more than ever convinced during the meal of his host's high standing in the professional world. He enjoyed the luncheon, the casual meeting with half a dozen men, the casual walk. But he was conscious of a weight upon his chest through it all—of a something to

be done which he did not quite see how to do with grace. Finally he did it without grace. He blurted out a question.

"By the way," he asked, struggling to be very easy, "you seem to know every one in this country, Mr. Hamidge. Do you happen to know a Miss Fletcher?"

"A Miss Fletcher?" Mr. Hamidge's keen eyes dwelt upon him inquiringly. "Is she a New Yorker? An American? Not that I know any Miss Fletcher at all," he added.

"I don't know where she comes from. She's an American, but I am not sure from what part of the country. She was merely a steamer acquaintance."

"Oh!" said Mr. Hamidge.

And then Gerald, to cover a certain embarrassment he felt, hurried into the strange tale of his experience with the customs officials. He noticed as he told it that he carefully forbore to mention Miss Fletcher's connection with the episode. And, although his own forbearance made him hot and angry, yet he could not force himself to drag her into the recital.

Had Gerald accepted Mr. Hamidge's invitation and been properly presented to the charming young women who formed the ornamental part of the famous jurist's household, it is possible that the thought of his steamer acquaintance might not have remained so persistently with him. Gerald had always been a young man of swift-ranging and light emotions; and, after all, there had been nothing so out of the ordinary in the girl of the steamer and of the Paterson anarchists' meeting as to warrant this continued interest in her. It was merely the absence of other feminine material with which to fill up the vacancies in his heart, or in his fancy, or whatever the part of him was which was usually concerned with the young women of his acquaintance.

He told himself this salutary truth as he found her recollection continually obtruding between him and the thing at hand. He told it with some vehemence on the evening that he purchased his ticket for Lexington, bound on the

first stage of the actual search for the missing heir of the Sheridans. For, on that evening, as he fell into line before the ticket office, he was convinced that he saw her at the other end of it; that it was she, and no other, who was receiving from the agent change in green bills and in silver, which she was dropping with reprehensible carelessness into a dark-green leather bag.

He fell out of line to make sure of his recognition, but collided with a stout, vague lady, who began to ask him questions which the traffic manager of the railroad himself would have been powerless to answer, let alone a visiting Briton. And by the time he had escaped the vague, troubled lady's inquiries, the slender, straight, proud little figure had disappeared from the waiting room, as far as he could see. Disconsolately he resumed his place at the end of the line again, and cursed his folly in being obsessed by the notion of Miss Kathleen Fletcher.

The chapters of misadventure which had marked his arrival in the United States seemed to be closed. He had, with some grim humor, assured himself that he was prepared for false arrest, for extradition from one State to another on any casual grounds, for railroad wreck and disaster at the least. He had toyed with the notion of buying a traveler's accident insurance policy; and he had allowed his mind to perform many tricks dealing with his first hours in the country, and pretending to forecast the future from the past.

But he arrived at Lexington without calamity; and the trip out to the smaller town of Bluevale was without incident. He had, to be sure, had the delusion of Miss Fletcher's presence for a second in the railroad station where he changed to the little local train; but this time he told himself, with distinct annoyance, that he would not even bother to prove it a delusion. It was one—that was all there was about it. It was a delusion, and he was a fool of a very highly qualified sort.

The hotel at Bluevale to which he repaired, at the distinguished solicitation of a gray-haired dandy with Chester-

fieldian manners—he actually had the sense of being met by an ancient retainer of old and dear friends, who were impatiently awaiting him, and who had conveyed to their servant some of their own ardent hospitality—was a delightful structure. It was a wide house, two and a half stories high, the broad center flanked by two great, colonnaded wings. It stood well back from the main street, on which it was situated, and the drive to its broad front door led through an avenue of oaks, rustily golden in the autumn sunshine. The grass of the lawn, which stretched down before the house to the street, was green with a springlike vividness of color; the air was finely bracing and sweet; there were comfortable-looking houses, old-fashioned, colonnaded, on either side of the road.

Opposite the hotel there was a vaunting Queen Anne structure of parti-colored bricks, which the driver pleasantly informed him was the residence of the honorable something or other. Near by was a brand-new courthouse of staring design. "We-all is de county seat, sah," said his informant proudly. A spire or two pierced the warm, blue sky in the distance. He saw some old ladies bending above their flower beds, not yet despoiled by frost in this kindly climate. He was seized with a warm regard for Bluevale. He preferred it to New York as much as he preferred his quaint old driver to the miscreant in whose care he had taken his first drive in the New World.

The landlord of the Bluevale Auditorium Hotel was, in spite of the name of his hostelry, as warmly welcoming as was befitting to the proprietor of the Auditorium's hack and coachman. He gave Gerald a wide choice in rooms, telling him the good and bad points of each with disinterested candor. He "allowed" that he would be glad to serve a second breakfast at once; and it proved so good a one that Mr. Cromartin wondered that his father had ever allowed the chance to revisit America to escape him. And all this was before he revealed the fact that he bore an introduction to Mr. Hathaway. When

that name was mentioned, it was perfectly evident that he could have the hotel for the asking—building, good will, and all.

"Judge Hathaway, sir, is one of the first citizens of Bluevale; one of the very first citizens. Any gentleman that's a friend of the judge's—"

Gerald hastened to disclaim the distinction. He merely had a letter of introduction to Mr. Hathaway—judge, was it? Judge by brevet, it seemed to be, after the kindly, title-bestowing habit of the region. But that he had a letter was enough. The landlord of the Bluevale Auditorium Hotel insisted upon sending an escort with him to Mr. Hathaway's office, which was in plain sight from the front door of the hotel. Accompanied by a barelegged negro lad, Gerald set forth to present Mr. Hamidge's letter to his Kentucky colleague.

Mr. Hathaway and several other gentlemen were in his offices. Dense blue clouds of smoke made that fact apparent, even if it rendered the gentlemen temporarily indiscernible. When Mr. Cromartin was finally able to distinguish the man for whom he had the introductory message, he found him to be a long, lean, brown-and-black person—brown-skinned, black-haired, black-eyed, black-mustached—with a narrow forehead and a belligerent jaw.

But in spite of the fanatic's mold of the upper part of his head, and the mulish cast of his lower features, he was a man of considerable attractiveness when he unbent. This he did the instant he had received Gerald's credentials. He led the way from the outer office, with its old, battered furniture, its abundance of cuspidors, its dearth of books, into an inner office.

"There was an investigation into this Peter Sheridan business some time ago—twenty years, I should say," he said. "It was before my time. I'm forty-two, but I didn't come into the firm until ten years ago. Thought I could do better with strangers—tried it on my own hook in Lexington. But when the old man began to fail, about ten years back, I came home. I can remember hearing



Something rolled backward into the bush.

something of the former investigation from him. They discovered nothing, I think."

"Doubtless there was nothing to discover," said Gerald courteously. "But it's an important matter now—a matter of inheritance and of clearing the title to a great property, whereas then it was the minor matter of setting a father's mind at rest. So that I've thought it best to go over the same old ground again. It occurred to me that Peter Sheridan, having no great love of his kindred, might have changed his name. That might account for there being no record of any property transfers in which he figures. So I've about concluded to look into all the transfers of the period at which he is supposed to have bought, and to trace them down, no matter what the names on the deeds."

"A very good idea," agreed Judge Hathaway. "I'll detail a man to go through all the Bluevale registry of deeds for the year you mention—and say a year before and a year after. It's difficult to fix a date after so long a time. Every one of them that isn't in the same ownership now we'll make note of; and we'll track down the other owners—as many of them as happen not to be native to the region and easily accounted for."

"That was my plan," agreed Gerald. "I'll put a man on it at once, my dear fellow," said Judge Hathaway, with expansive cordiality. "But it will be a work of some days. You must come out to my ranch with me—I was going down to-morrow—and try a little of our Kentucky riding. You'll like it, I'll wager."

Gerald thanked him, and murmured a few protests; but they were overborne by the hospitable insistence of the "judge." He finally consented to go down with that legal luminary on the next day but one to his stock farm, ten miles out of Bluevale. He almost feared the Auditorium Hotel proprietor's reproach; he felt that he was rebuffing one hospitable soul at the insistence of another. But the landlord took the situation with more than philosophy. His friendly attitude was that of one of two brothers who surrenders a delightful guest to his kinsman for a period.

"The judge's place is worth going far to see," he said, with much local pride.

And then, as he was an old man, Gerald began to interview him on the subject of the strangers who had settled in Bluevale in the early eighties. The landlord had a wonderfully retentive memory. He recalled an infinitesimal score which one stranger had departed owing him. He recalled the favorite dish of another, the color of ties a third had affected, the left-handed habit of driving of a fourth; but he gave no clew to the searcher for Peter Sheridan. He remembered no dark-browed, anarchistic young Irishman, with a taste for strong drink and for its corollary embroilments, who had come to the region in the period of which Gerald inquired.

And the young investigator, swallowing his impatience, was forced to journey with the cordial Judge Hathaway out to Midlands—so the judge's place was called—no wiser in regard to Nora Braisted's most inconsiderate uncle than he was when he arrived at Bluevale.

Midlands was obviously the pride of its owner's heart; and Gerald, cherishing a certain weakness for horseflesh himself, did not wonder at his host's infatuation. The dwelling itself was nothing unusual—a wide, roomy, Southern house, bisected by a great hall through which stairs curved to an upper gallery; a house of many verandas, upstairs and down, of comfortable, open fires, of well-worn, comfortable furniture, and few adornments.

But the stables were delights; fine enough, well cared for enough, to have

been ladies' boudoirs, Gerald thought. Here ventilating schemes had been brought to high efficiency; here cleanliness had been made a high art. Over each stall hung the pedigree of the horse that inhabited it. Every horse had its Sunday bridle. Gerald learned, with barely concealed amusement, that the judge was a churchman who felt that he was doing honor to his religious convictions when he made this distinction between the daily and the Sunday apparel of his pets, and excused some of his gambling proclivities on the ground of that observance.

"Every Sunday morning, sir," he told Gerald, swelling out his chest, "every Sunday morning I go through the stables and the quarters and give every horse a lump of sugar. I've been denounced, sir, by some of our clergy, who are opposed to a trying out of horses on the track. I have been denounced from the pulpit of some, sir. I ask you how many of them observe the Sabbath as I do—an extra hour of sleep for all my boys in the morning, an extra rasher of bacon with their breakfast, and a special outfit for my horses, with a special visit from me and a special lump of sugar, sir!"

Gerald managed to gasp that the judge's course was a highly commendable one.

Mrs. Hathaway, wife of this model Sabbatarian, was a faded, apprehensive-looking woman, who had once been very pretty. It was palpable from her husband's complimentary manner to her, and his tender deference, that he was unaware of the changes time had brought to her appearance. He recounted, with naïve pride, the struggle he had had to win her; and he evidently thought the victory had been well worth while. Mrs. Hathaway colored a little with pleasure; but when the color died down, she wore again the nervous pallor which had impressed Gerald on his meeting with her.

"Are you a horse lover, too, Mrs. Hathaway?" he asked, late in the evening, when they had had coffee before the big fire in the sitting room, and when Mrs. Hathaway had played the accom-

paniments for her young daughter's singing—an entertainment asked for by the judge, who had the air of a man offering to a guest the finest of musical treats; and indeed Gerald found the young girl's flutelike voice very pleasing, and her dark, vivid eyes and wild-rose color very lovely to look upon. Mrs. Hathaway averred that she had always loved horses.

"Not quite so well that I go out with the judge each night to bid them good night," she said, half laughing, as the judge arose for his nightly pilgrimage. "But Gwennie does that."

Gwennie had thrown a hooded cape over her shoulders, and was prepared to accompany her father. Gerald, smiling sympathetically on the picture they made, declined to accompany them. When they had left the room, his hostess turned to him with a swift glance of supplication.

"Mr. Cromartin," she began nervously, "I'm going to do an awful thing. I'm going to ask you to give my husband a message I'm afraid to give him myself. He has forbidden me ever to refer to a certain subject—I don't dare disobey him; but I cannot sleep if he doesn't know. This was thrown in our window this morning." She held a ball of paper to him. "Won't you—won't you please—say that it was thrown into the room just now, and that you picked it up? He will read it then. It's a warning from the night raiders."

"The night raiders?" repeated Gerald stupidly, holding out his hand to receive the communication.

Mrs. Hathaway nodded, her eyes fixed imploringly upon him. He smoothed out the paper, and read, in an illiterate handwriting upon the dirty sheet:

Last call. Withdraw from your tobacco contracts before Sunday or you know what to expect.

The customary skull and crossbones of such literature went for signature. Gerald rolled the paper into a ball again, and looked inquiringly at his hostess. She hurried to the front of the room, and opened a window.

"He'll explain it," she said hurriedly, "if only, if only you'll do what I pray and entreat you to do. It isn't so, of course; but it might save life if he could be brought to listen."

"Of course, I'll tell the fib, my dear lady," Gerald assured her. "That will not make the littlest scratch on my battered old conscience. But——"

"He'll explain it, he'll explain it. I'll be out of the room so as not to complicate things by looking guilty when you tell the—fib. When they come in, will you say that I've come to talk with Mina the cook, and that I want Gwennie to go to bed? Thank you, and I'll be back as soon as you've told him."

Gerald stood by the open window, looking out upon a moonlighted, peaceful night, crumpling the ball of paper in his hand. In a little while, Judge Hathaway and his daughter came back to the house, crossing the bright sward before it. Gerald watched the electric lights in the stables, a quarter of a mile to the left, go suddenly out as the two figures came on.

He gave Gwennie her mother's message, and the girl, with pretty "good nights," left the room. Gerald turned to the judge.

"I've another message. I don't know for whom it is or whence it comes. It arrived via the open window as I stood there. I can scarcely believe it was intended for me—though I have had some queer adventures since I landed here, and there's no telling."

He gave the slip to Judge Hathaway. The judge's nostrils twitched, and an angry red mottled his sallow face.

"Damn their insolence!" he shouted, slamming his fist upon a center table full of books and flowers so that the vases shook. "I defy them. I——"

"Then the message was for you?" said Gerald. "Not for me? May I ask——"

"You may well ask! You may well ask if this is a free country! Am I to be dictated to as to what market I shall sell my goods at? I ask you, is any man, any free-born American citizen, to be told where he shall and where he shall not sell the products of his labor,

or of his wealth? Is such a state of things endurable?"

"I'm afraid you're propounding economic problems to me, and I'm nothing of an economist. Is it one of the many obscure forms of trades unionism?"

"Sir," said Judge Hathaway, much as if he were addressing a judge and jury; "sir, I am a tobacco grower. Not a large one, and not primarily that. But I have some of my own money invested in tobacco lands, and my wife's inheritance is in that form. You may have heard of the tobacco trust? No? Well, you can guess what it is. It is in practical control of the tobacco business in this country. I have been selling my product to the trust. I admit that they have lowered prices. I don't enjoy having a trust for a buyer any more than the rest of the world does. But in this part of the country there are many growers—no, not many growers, but some—who believe that they can force the trust to make terms with them. How? By refusing to sell to the trust. I have not the least earthly objection to their refusal to sell to the trust. I don't care what they do with their product. They may try to carry it the other side of Jordan with them for all I care. But for myself, I propose to sell my tobacco to the people that are in the market to buy it. That is the trust. I have agreed to sell to the trust. I have told those hotheads who were sent to persuade me not to that I should do as I pleased with my own. I have been receiving threatening letters since. This is one of them."

"The party which doesn't sell to the trust is the night-raiding party?" asked Gerald.

"Yes," answered the judge shortly. "They ride about intimidating the men who can be intimidated by firing tobacco barns, shooting at trust growers, trying to inaugurate a general reign of terror."

"You do not fear that they may be as good—or as bad—as their threats in your case?"

"Bah! I know them. I know who the leaders in this sort of devilry are. I'll jail them all. I'll make some of

them swing for it! Don't misunderstand me. I don't mean to imply that every man who is fighting the trust is doing so by unwarrantable means. But there's a lawless element in the party, and it is the one which predominates in this section, I'm afraid. The kind of men and boys who would be doing something else violent if it weren't this. It enrages me particularly because it frightens my wife. Nothing frightens Gwennie!" he added proudly. "I shall take Virginia down to Lexington with me when we go down on Tuesday morning. The thing has been getting on her nerves. Here she comes now. Not a word of this to her, Mr. Cromartin, not a word!"

And the gallant judge led the conversation to lightsome themes, suited for feminine ears, while his wife's eyes implored Gerald for a signal.

Sunday at the old-fashioned country church, with the vehicles—new and old, buckboards, buggies, automobiles, carryalls, and every sort—gathered under a little shed, with leisurely talk and visiting after the service, with invitations to two carriage loads to come over to Midlands for luncheon, invitations which were accepted with as much nonchalance as they were given, was a delightful day to Gerald. He was enjoying, with the zest of a young man, the seeing of a new sort of life. He forgot the night raiders in the quiet, seemly pleasures of the day.

At midnight—he had been asleep scarcely half an hour, he thought—he was awakened by the clatter of hoofs on the drive below his window. There was a call for the judge—a long-drawn "who-ee!" twice repeated, a ringing of the doorbell, a confusion of sounds. He heard his host's window, next his own, flung wide, and then the quick, curt speech of the messenger.

"That you, jedge? They've fired the barns. Grimley and Wheaton have turned on all the apparatus to stop the flames—don't know how much good it'll do. Some hose has been cut. Inside job, that. Them chemicals may do some good. There's shootin'. How long before you'll be ready?"



And into the dream she was entering, with the irrational irresponsibility of dream women!

How long? It seemed to Gerald not ten minutes before he was one of a great cavalcade sweeping down the drive and out into the beautiful, still, autumn, moonlit country. He knew that the house was guarded by men from the stables and the farm. He knew that neighbors had appeared in an incredibly short time; and that they, with some of the Midlands employees, his host, and himself, all armed, were sweeping on toward the tobacco barns, five miles from the house.

He had a thrilling sense of adventure. He felt the cool air rush by his cheek, his fingers closed lovingly around the revolver his host had thrust into his hand. The motion of the splendid horse beneath him was more delightful, more soothing to him than the swinging of

his cradle had been when he was a baby. He had never been in a fight, never in an impersonal quarrel where to batter, to slay, maybe, to prove one's self the better man was a righteous performance. Primeval joy and fire ran through his veins.

And suddenly, blent with that delicious, that intoxicating current, ran the thought of the girl. He had youth's moment of wishing to show itself a magnificent fighting man in one woman's eyes. And they were Kathleen Fletcher's eyes in which he wished, in that moment of primitive, surging emotion, so to shine. He swept on through the night, heart and blood singing.

In twenty minutes they were at the blazing barns. The countryside was ruddily illumined, the orange-red of the

flames obscuring the pale, peaceful glamour of the moon. In the light of the flames there were seen running figures, black and fantastic, in the red glow. They were shooting as they ran, shooting as they appeared and disappeared. Some one, hurrying out to meet the judge, caught a bullet in his shoulder on the way. Gerald had seen the bush from behind which the flash had come. He rode down upon it. He fired. Something rolled backward into the brush.

There was a swift confusion of orders on both sides. Neighbors and allies closed in upon Judge Hathaway.

"Keep in the middle!" they told him. "They want to kidnap you. You remember Leander?"

The judge chafed violently at the safeguards thrown around him. He eluded them to a certain extent. It was just as the raiders had received the word to fly, and were putting the command into execution.

"I'll not let them get away like this!" cried Judge Hathaway, and drove his horse forward out of the circle of his protectors.

There were two flying shots. His horse went down, and he under the horse. When they pulled him from under, they found him bleeding from a wound in the upper leg.

"Mrs. Birdsong's is the nearest house," said some one. "Carry him there! Ah, here come the officers—too late, as usual!"

The sheriff and a posse rode into view with every appearance of extreme haste. The telephone message for them had been sent from Midlands as the judge's party had ridden off to the protection of the barns.

"I saw one of them, Waters," the judge shouted to the sheriff. "Slouch-hatted, masked, and all the rest of it, I saw one of them! I'll swear to it anywhere. I'll swear to it! It was he gave me this— Ouch! What are you doing here with me?" he demanded of his friends, who were lifting him upon an improvised litter.

"Going to carry you to Mrs. Birdsong's, judge," some one answered.

"Sent a hurry call in for Doctor Redpath. Steady now, boys!"

"It was that Gilroy!" shouted the judge, by way of farewell to the sheriff. "It was Gilroy without a shadow of a doubt! If you don't get him, Waters, you'll be shy one vote next election."

And his voice died away as the party of four who carried him, swung in a bed of coats whipped upon saplings, began to move. The flames were dying down, subdued in part by the water and chemicals which the barn guard had been applying.

Gerald walked beside the stretcher. The glorious mood of fight had unaccountably gone out of him. It had departed when the man behind the bush had doubled up. He was glad, with an awful sense of horror barely escaped, that he had seen the wounded man pick himself up by and by and hobble away to his companions. The judge looked uncomfortably white in the moonlight; and sometimes a groan made its way past his zealously closed, black-bearded lips.

Mrs. Birdsong's house lay half a mile away from the river bank, on which the judge's tobacco barns, bordering his tobacco fields, stood. It seemed an endless half mile to Gerald—ininitely longer than the five miles they had galloped through the night to reach the *mêlée*. He walked beside his horse, and occupied himself with crude questionings upon the human way of doing things. There was something out of joint with the poor race, he decided. It was not so lovely a place as it had seemed a while ago. And he was glad—glad that no woman, least of all Miss Fletcher, had been there to see them all acting like murderous lunatics. What a queer girl she was, to be sure, with her vague outreaching toward the world of mystery which surrounds this world of fact!

A glimmer of lights brighter than the moonlight that bathed everything first heralded the nearing of Mrs. Birdsong's house.

"They seem to be up," said Gerald stupidly to the man by whose side he happened to be.

"Yes, of course. We sent a man

ahead on horseback to tell the old lady what to expect."

"An old lady?" Gerald repeated the words mechanically. He had no real interest in the age of Mrs. Birdsong.

"Yes; but she's game for anything, all right. A fine, little, right and tight old lady. Greatly respected hereabouts. I believe she could sell her tobacco to any one she wanted to without stirring up a bit of trouble. The boys would be afraid to tackle her the way they did the judge here, for all he's a big fellow and a lawyer; and she's only a little mite of a white-haired woman. They most of them can recollect times she's caught them doing something they hadn't ought to do, and the way she's laid into them for it. She's a little something of a Tartar—though she's a good, kind woman, too. Funny, the thing that makes men afraid, ain't it? 'Tain't the law—the judge has got it all on his side. And he's got money, and influence, and all. But I tell you, any of that gang to-night would be more afraid of old Mrs. Birdsong, that's got none too much money and don't know or care about any law. Here we are, now!"

A door in the middle of the house opened, and framed in it, outlined in the light, was the slight figure of an elderly woman. She was very erect; and it struck Gerald that the intense silver whiteness of her hair, upon which the hall lamps shone down dazzlingly, was rather like a crown.

"Bring him up this way!" she called. "The doctor'll be here in five minutes now. I've been talking to Mrs. Redpath over the telephone. Judge—judge, why would you go and be so rash, especially after being so pig-headed? There, there, this isn't the time to talk to you! Come in, all of you. The coffee's ready, and some sliced ham, and some bread. You'll all need it after this sort of a picnic. And—the front room, please! I've all the hot water and lint that'll be needed. Kathleen, you come down and give these poor, starved, fighting men

some coffee while I get the judge's things off him. Thad—you know the way to the dining room—lead to it, and don't be standing there! Coming, Kathleen?"

"Yes, grandma!"

The voice sounded in the hall overhead. Gerald, headed toward the dining room in the wake of Thad and the other men, stood transfixed. He looked up toward the head of the stairs. He rubbed his eyes. This was all a dream, anyway! This was a nightmare of shooting and burning in a strange country; and into the dream she was entering, with the irrational irresponsibility of dream women!

Certainly she appeared at the head of the stairs—Kathleen Fletcher, slim, straight, dark-haired, pure-eyed. Certainly she walked down the stairs, her hand white upon the old mahogany rail worn lustrous from many generations of such hands. A gleam of rosy light flashed from the great gem in a ring she wore. Surely she was smiling in hospitable welcome upon the man at the foot of the stairs, and was offering him her hand, and he was saying: "Miss Kathleen! The sight of you's good for sore eyes." Certainly she had turned to come toward the dining room; and now, at the moment when the vision should melt, the dream dissolve—for she was so near that he could touch her—he was going to—he would put out his hand, and she would disappear into nothingness. Certainly at that instant, she recoiled. She looked up at him, her smiling, friendly face became stiffened in proud inquiry; and a voice, not like that that had spoken to old Mrs. Birdsong, said to him:

"You? Here?"

There was no question that America was a land for strange happenings, Mr. Cromartin decided, as, having admitted his identity and his presence in the place she designated as "here," he followed Miss Fletcher into the dining room to consume cold ham and hot coffee.

The Little Person

By
Marie de Montalvo

ILLUSTRATED BY H. M. BUNKER

THE Young Reporter laid down the thin, typewritten sheets, and frankly winked back two real salt tears.

"Gad," he exclaimed, "it must be good to make me do that! Does it seem good to you, Margaret?"

The Little Person had listened very quietly to the reading of his story.

"You have an excellent memory," she observed.

This scarcely indicated unmixed enthusiasm, and might even be thought slightly enigmatic. But the Young Reporter was busy folding and smoothing his manuscript and glancing at his watch.

"You see," he went on, "I wanted you to hear it first of any because you know more about it—why, it's half yours!"

He snapped the case of his watch shut, and looked at her with that sudden, winsome smile that never had failed to bring an answering curve to her lips; but the Little Person was considering, and her eyes dropped absently to a frayed spot in the rug.

"Yes," she finally assented, "I think it is."

Something in her tone brought his eyes to her face a little more intently, the lids narrowed.

"Well, you never wrote it, you know," he reminded her dryly. "And—do you think you could?"

There was no reply, and he seemed to expect none, for he went back at once to the topic under discussion, resuming his cheerful tone, and asked her whether she liked his story.

"It's very well written," said the Little Person; "but I don't think I'm qualified to give an opinion, because—well,



Page one burned her fingers.

you see, I was there when it happened. It's perhaps too close to get a perspective."

The Young Reporter was greatly pleased.

"It must be all right, then, if it brings back what really happened. I'd better be off to post it while it's hot."

He began struggling into his overcoat.

"I'm immensely relieved that you like it, Margie. I couldn't have done it without your help—in telling me what happened. Of course, I don't mean the real work. I expect great things of it."

"Gad, I'm as hoarse as an old crow. Do you know we've sat here five mortal hours?"

He crossed the room to stand before her, hat in hand, brilliant, aggressive, splendid, his eyes softening to a look of appealing tenderness.

"I'll come soon again, little one; but don't wait in for me, because I've neglected the paper shamefully for the story, and shall be making up for it."

Somehow, behind the commonplace

words, there was a tone that lent them meaning; that showed what concrete thing this success meant to him, and that he would not trust himself to see her until he was sure of it. And the soft, significant fire in his eyes brought the color to her cheeks before he walked swiftly to the door and closed it sharply behind him.

"Oh!" breathed the Little Person, as she heard him racing down the five flights of stairs that were none too clean.

"Oh!" exclaimed the Little Person again. Then she ran to the mirror.

It was a very small mirror, and quite inadequate when it came to inspecting the safety pin at the back of one's belt. Indeed, she was so unused to a full view of herself that once, looking into a large mirror some distance off, she had exclaimed: "What a queer little person!" and so given herself a nickname.

Still, even its wavering surface could not conceal the fact that a rare and not unbecoming flush had quite blotted out her "office wrinkles"; that her eyes had a glorified shine, and her mouth a babyish tremor quite unsuitable for the young-woman-who-earns - her - living; quite the expression, in fact, of the young - woman - who - makes - some-man-do-it-for-her, in clinging femininity.

But it vanished as a thought came that tightened her lips, and she turned to open the old desk that incongruously held a washbowl and pitcher.

From away back, under a heap of the neat collars she wore, "to make her look more like Jane Eyre than she felt," she extracted a bulky manuscript, and sat down with it on her lap. Her story! The story she had written nights when she was too tired to sleep; daytimes in trolley cars and subways; Sundays when she should have been breathing the fresh air denied her through the week—for more than a year. And it was good. The Big Critic had said so.

"Not like that," she had told him, nodding with airy confidence. "Wait till some day when I don't have to be tired, and I can sit in a room where you

see real trees, and maybe a hill or a bit of ocean out of the window—then I'll write it!"

The Big Critic had hinted that he had an aunt—nice aunt—who lived in the country.

But the Little Person had turned the subject so deftly, she could see him wonder whether she had understood; and he was led to make vague remarks about young folks with brains being a good investment for old men's money. But the Little Person had conceived a rather pitiful dread of debts and obligations.

His encouragement, however, had done a great deal to help her bright disdain of petty hardships—the dingy office, with its soul-killing work; the lumpy cot that did duty as a divan in the daytime, the frayed rug, the scrappy meals at fourth-rate restaurants, the five flights of stairs that were none too clean; for was she not a literary light under a bushel—the bushel soon to be removed?

But that hope was gone now. For it was her story that the Young Reporter had read this afternoon—her story told as he would tell it, in his brilliant, graphic way, after two weeks' work. She had told it to him as it had happened to her, one night while the lights glittered, and the orchestra played tinkly music, and he sat entranced, absently consuming the oysters he loathed, and all kinds of mysterious and indigestible concoctions.

Of course, he did not know that she was writing it; and it was really wonderful how quickly he had absorbed it, with what amazing accuracy he had filled in the gaps. And yet—against her faithful work of more than a year—

The Little Person lit a match, and applied it to page one. A real hearth would have helped; "her pale, stricken face lighted fitfully by the heartless blaze as she watched the precious words crumble to ashes before her sorrowing eyes"—something like that.

Here page one burned her fingers, and she hurriedly dropped the flaming bit into the washbasin. The match went out, and she kindled another for

page two, which scorched her lashes. Page three refused to ignite; and she tore the rest of the manuscript to pieces in a temper, and dropped it into an inadequate wastebasket.

Then she filled her pitcher at the sink in the hall, and began to do her Sunday washing, pasting the handkerchiefs on the most nearly clean windowpanes, and hanging the other articles—home manufactured of cotton crape to save ironing—on a line that stretched across the room, and caught her under the chin every time she was in a hurry and forgot about it.

And then, suddenly, she began to laugh, and threw herself on the lumpy couch, and laughed, and laughed, and then she lay very still in the little, ugly room at the top of the stairs that were none too clean. And the messenger who came with a letter from the Young Reporter got no answer to his knock.

A few nights later, the Young Reporter came himself. It was a stay-at-home night for the Little Person, on account of rain, and her only pair of shoes being wet. So she steadied her face when she heard him running impetuously up the stairs, and shaded the flame of her spirit lamp as she called in a perfectly good, gay voice for him to come in; for the Little Person had made up her mind.

"I've sold it!" he cried, waving a check before her eyes. "And look!"

The check showed four figures.

"It's going to be a best seller—they're going to advertise——"

The Little Person nodded and laughed, quite a delighted laugh; but she kept on stirring. The Young Reporter's face underwent one of its lightning changes.

"Sweetheart!" he said.

Then he came to her swiftly, impulsively, knocking her little teapot from the table as he passed.

"Say you're glad, little girl! Don't

you know what it means to me? I'm made, Margie. I don't have to wait any longer. I can have a home, and you—you in it, to be always my little inspiration!"

And he took her in his arms.

The Little Person could never account for what followed. Somehow, she failed to thrill at his touch, his brilliant, tender eyes failed to

bring the color to her cheeks. She was resenting with curious intensity the unnoticed broken teapot. Would he always break and destroy thus carelessly whatever came in the way of what he wanted?

Suddenly she pushed him away.

"No!" she cried furiously. "No!"

Astonished, angry, he released her. She swallowed hard to keep down a torrent of words. Then:

"Dan," she said, in a funny, flat little voice, "I don't think I'd be an—an inspiration to you any more. You see,



A few nights later, the Young Reporter came himself.

there are only two kinds of people—live ones and dead ones. You're very much alive—big, vital, successful. I'm feeling—rather dead just now. You don't want to marry me." The dangerous tenderness began to come back into his eyes, and she hurried on. "And I," she added lightly, "I don't care to marry you. Thank you just the same," breathlessly. "Good-by."

She faced him with outstretched hand and a stiff smile that did very well. He stared at her, deeply hurt, wholly astonished, and went out.

The Little Person slowly turned, and began picking up the broken china from the floor.

It was not long after that she fell ill, and the Big Critic came to see her, and taxed her only armchair with his bulk. He came to talk about his aunt, who needed some one young and bright to keep away the ghostly memories in the big house in the country. And this time the Little Person's nerves were not as steady, nor her bright disdain of the rug, and the stairs, and the lumpy couch as much in evidence. So her chin quivered when she shook her head.

The Big Critic leaned over and touched her shoulder awkwardly.

"My dear, my dear!" he murmured. "I'm fifty-eight, and very fat; and I *do* understand. Can't you trust me?"

The quiver was a laugh now, that presently choked into a sob while the Big Critic patted her kindly.

"Have a little deluge, if you like, my dear, and then we'll get into this fur coat I wrenched off my chauffeur for you; and we'll go to a place I know, where we can get a thick steak and hashed-brown potatoes, and just one glass of claret, and salad, and—and some white ice cream. That's what Aunt Mary says girls are sure to like.



After all, there didn't seem to be any reason why she shouldn't visit Aunt Mary.

Doesn't Aunt Mary sound pretty good to you, little girl? She's expecting you to-morrow."

The Little Person was just groping for the handkerchief that is never there; so he lent her one, tucking it into her hand so she wouldn't have to uncover her reddened eyes to take it, and had her bundled into the car, and sitting in the restaurant with her back to the light, after just enough of a drive to clear the stuffiness away. The Big Critic did seem to understand!

And, after all, there didn't seem to be any reason why she shouldn't visit Aunt Mary, when she was assured that it was the only thing in the world that would make Aunt Mary's life bearable during the next few months—and to think of a room with seven windows, and a fireplace to tend in long, sweet hours of idleness, a glimpse of hills on one side, and the bay on the other—quaint, homely pictures and faded samplers on the wall, and Aunt Mary her-

self coming in with glasses of jelly and molds of pressed chicken for the invalid.

So there she was, after a very few days, quite fallen in love with the mixture of country prejudice and second-hand worldliness embodied in Aunt Mary, and pronouncing the whole place a realization of her vision.

"But I can't write," she told the Big Critic sadly. "It's all gone out of me!"

And so it had, until the deep silence of the woods took her in hand and taught her things. And then, one day, the Big Critic ran out from town to come upon her in a corner, with an ink nose and disheveled hair, steadily adding to an untidy pile of hieroglyphics, and very cross when spoken to. But he didn't seem to mind, for he retired to the kitchen, and executed an apparently joyful contortion he called "galumphing," which shocked Aunt Mary and upset old Sally's gravity for a week. In fact, she never was quite the same woman again.

After that, of course, everything went swimmingly; and one day the whole house had to be turned upside down for the party that was to introduce the newest young successful author to the right sort of people. And, of course, with the triumph at hand, the new young author cared not a whit about it, and moped by her fireplace, with thoughts of a loveless life, and how empty was fame, and so forth. Which was very foolish, for anybody might know something was going to happen.

For, of course, as she stood receiving her guests, and feeling pleased in spite of herself at the pretty things they told her, in walked the Young Reporter, with the Big Critic, whose face was fatuously and inhumanly expressionless.

He came straight to her in his old impetuous fashion, quite ignoring the great people in the way; and the Little Person found out what her real triumph was, and her heart pounded. But her chin went up, too, and she greeted him

sweetly and formally, and turned to the next in line with the slightly bored smile of a real celebrity. And how she did enjoy it! The Big Critic enjoyed it, too, for she caught him watching her out of the corner of his eye.

But the Young Reporter disarmed her, as usual. He stood aside meekly, waiting for her to be at leisure, and her heart warmed to the look in his face.

"I wonder if he's been getting regular meals?" she thought, as she shook hands with a renowned sculptor.

At the first opportunity, the Young Reporter was beside her, and they went out on the piazza. There was no preface.

"Margaret," he said, "I've learned my lesson. I've been angry, and a blind idiot, and it took your name on a title-page to show me what a conceited ass a man can be. Are you going to forgive me?"

Margaret's effort to look mildly interested in this guest was fast becoming a miserable failure with that old fluttering in her throat.

"You did rather ask me to be your wifely Boswell," she murmured.

"Why didn't you mercifully tell me what a hideous egotist I was?"

"You wouldn't have believed me."

"No; that's true, I wouldn't," he agreed, in deep dejection.

She flew to his defense.

"Well, after all, why should you? I had done nothing, and you had!"

"Well, you sure have now! And you might then. Did you ever think of writing that story—the one—"

The Little Person began to tremble.

"Don't let's go over those dreadful times! It's all past now, and—and Dan—will you believe that I—that I've sometimes regretted—that I didn't take you, anyway?"

The Young Reporter caught his breath.

"Do you want me now?" he breathed.

She did.





What the Editor Has to Say

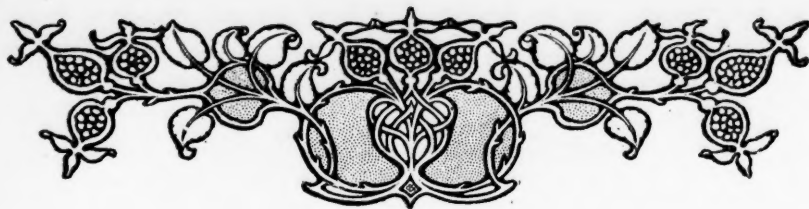
IF you are fond of exercising the right of sex in regard to changing your mind, you will find an especial delight in the novel which Florence Morse Kingsley, author of "Titus," "The Singular Miss Smith," "The Glass House," etc., has written for SMITH'S, and which will appear complete in the next issue of the magazine. "Wilhelmina Changes Her Mind" is a delightful, inconsequential, witty sort of tale, full of charm, and laughter, and pleasant people. It presents for your consideration no problems, but it does illustrate entertainingly certain feminine inconsistencies and peculiarities that it is possible you have noticed in yourself and others. There's a breath of youthful romance blowing through it as agreeable as the clear air after a summer storm. If you read it on the first day of September, you will find it seasonable, but it is well worth reading at any time.

ALTOGETHER different, a great deal more serious, but just as pleasant in the reading, is Anne O'Hagan's essay, "Why I Am a Suffragist." If you shudder at the thought of listening to an argument on woman's suffrage, read this, and you will be converted—if not to a belief that votes for women are a good thing, at least to a conviction that the topic is one of the most interesting in the world. The essay is a personal appeal and argument; it is frank, and sincere, and forceful. If we had as good a paper on the other side of the question, we would be glad to print it.

ABOVE all, don't fail to read in the next issue of SMITH'S what Elizabeth Newport Hepburn has to say on the subject of "in-laws." We all, whether married or in single blessedness, have relatives by law as well as blood. We each solve the problem of associating with them in slightly different fashion, but there are few of us who are quite satisfied with our acquired kin if we only told the truth about it.

JOHN D. SWAIN, who wrote "Uncle William's Industrious Young Man," in the current number, has in the next issue a great short story, "Baron Hausenpfeffer." We have all heard of German nobles forced through the pressure of an unkind fate to seek their bread as barbers, waiters, and the like, but few of us have seen them in the flesh. Read this story, and meet one of them drawn from life, as he is, interesting, surprising, and funny.

THERE'S another good short story by Hildegard Lavender, one by Holman F. Day, and another by Marion Hill. There is some funny verse by Wallace Irwin, a review of the season's drama by Howard Fitzalan, and another installment of "The Trail of the Sheridan Heir." Altogether in the number there are a dozen short stories in addition to the complete novel, and each story in its way is worth the price of the magazine. In the next issue also will be the announcement of a new serial for SMITH'S.



How to Prevent and Cure Minor Foot Troubles

By Dr. Lillian Whitney

WE do not usually connect youth, buoyancy, elasticity of spirits, and a hopeful aspect upon life with our feet, and yet they are intimately associated. It is said that a man is as old as his arteries, and a woman as old as she looks; but a wag once exclaimed that a man is as old as his feet, and a woman—but that's another story!

However, a current expression among newspaper men is that a man's as old as his legs—which means, of course, that when the feet are worn out, when they can no longer cover the ground with the fleetness of a deer and the enthusiasm and tirelessness of youth—well, then one's usefulness is gone.

Why should the feet grow old before the hands, or any other part of the body? Some one has said because they are farthest removed from the heart and brain. This is true in cases of feeble circulation and poor blood; but the chief reason is cruel neglect and abuse.

Those who, through vanity and pride, incase their feet in the smallest possible shoe, changing the shape with every passing fad in footwear, endure anguish for this gratification, and develop positive deformities in the course of years. Others err in the opposite direction, and are indifferent as to size, shape, and consequences resulting from such carelessness, until the feet cry out in despair

at such treatment. Only savages can afford to ignore the feelings of their feet. Civilization demands its price, and we pay very heavily in foot ills.

To insure comfort, the fit of the shoe is undoubtedly of first importance. The surest means of securing this is to have all shoes built over one's own last, and under no circumstances change the style worn. A moment's reflection shows us the absurdity of making our feet conform to shoes of varying shapes, regardless of the shape of the foot itself. Just as no two faces are alike, so no two feet are alike, even upon the same body; one is usually a little wider, or a trifle longer than the other. The so-called "common-sense" shoe is undurable to some feet, whereas those built over a Spanish last cripple others; and yet both are indiscriminately worn without a thought of the havoc they play. The ideal shoe is one fitting perfectly into the heel and over the instep, giving the toes ample room.

In the matter of cleanliness, the feet require the same attention that is daily bestowed upon the face. Unless they are scrubbed frequently, the skin becomes dry, very harsh, and thick, the pores are clogged with waste substances, and a horny layer, called "callous," soon forms. The *health* of the feet is primarily dependent upon the hygienic care

they receive. It goes without saying that a skin thickly coated with grime and horny material cannot breathe; the nourishment to the parts is seriously interfered with, the circulation is impeded, the nerves suffer, and all sorts of ills follow.

It is a great mistake to abuse the feet with coarse, heavily seamed, or torn hose. Procure the finest quality your purse can afford; and if you must wash them yourself every night before retiring, do so, in order that you may refresh yourself with a sweet, clean pair each morning.

Tired feet are quickly rested by giving them an alcohol rub, and changing one's shoes and stockings. Indeed, shoes that have been worn all day, or street shoes in general, should always be removed indoors for those of lighter weight. This alone is often sufficient to rest feet that have grown hot, tired, and achy.

Powders of talcum and an antiseptic, sprinkled into the shoes, are very cooling and comforting; in many cases preventing the burning, tired feeling that is so troublesome in warm weather or in heated rooms, or when wearing heavy shoes. One of the simplest consists of:

Powdered orris root.....	1 ounce
Oxide of zinc.....	3 ounces
Powdered talc.....	6 ounces

For feet that have become sensitive, so that walking is painful, local baths of various kinds are wonderfully helpful. To an ordinary foot bath, add the following salts:

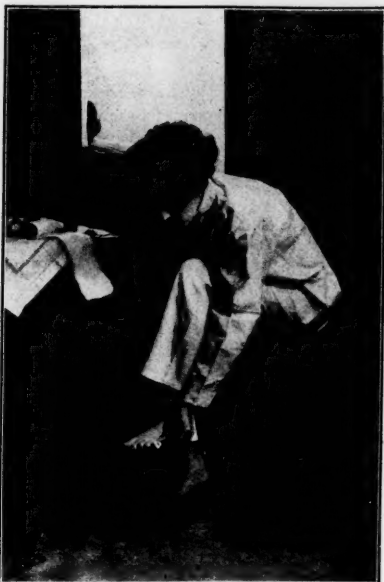
Sodium bicarbonate.....	3 ounces
Sodium sulphate.....	1 ounce
Salt	4 ounces

This bath brings relief to the average sufferer. However, where the feet have become so tender that all exercise is torture, a magical change is effected by bathing them in a solution containing this mixture:

Crystal iodine.....	20 grains
Potassium iodide.....	2 drams
Sodium bicarbonate.....	2 ounces
Salt	14 ounces

Rub the iodine and potassium iodide together, add the sodium bicarbonate,

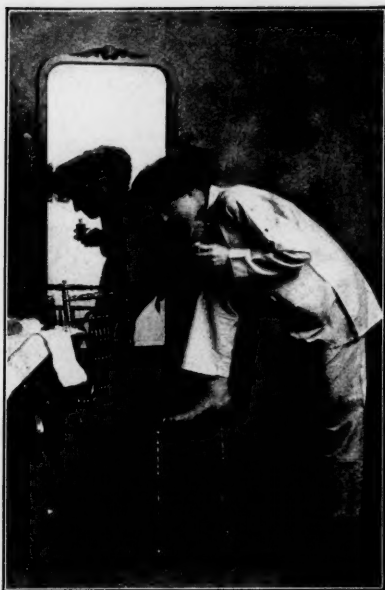
and mix with the salt. In preparing this foot bath, I advise the use of bran soap, or of bran flour, with shavings of Castile soap; enough of either to make the water gelatinously soapy. Divide the mixture given above into four parts, and use one part for one bath. In other words, one-fourth of the above amount is enough for one foot bath. The feet must first be cleaned, then immersed in the bath, and allowed to remain fifteen minutes. It is frequently possible after



After removal of corn, protect toe with ring of felt.

this treatment to remove callous growths, corns, etc., with the greatest ease. Subjecting the feet to these baths morning and night for one week, usually insures relief for months to the most chronic sufferers. They are truly rejuvenating, and I heartily recommend their use to all those who stand or walk a great deal, and to those who feel that their feet have become "Oslerized."

Strapping the feet with soap plaster—if put on properly it does not require much space—is helpful to dry, hot skins



Insert tuft of cotton saturated in solution of nitrate of silver under ingrown toe-nail.

as well as rubbing them with a soap paste made of:

Soft green soap.....	16 ounces
Glycerin.....	2 ounces
Alcohol.....	1 ounce
Oil of lavender flowers.....	2 drams

The soap paste is allowed to dry into the skin. It is cooling, softens hardened cuticle so that it is readily removed either with a coarse towel or pumice stone, and also restores *tone* to muscles and nerves.

Corns are the commonest of all the foot troubles. They are the result of ill-fitting shoes; and when fully grown, and the habit established, as it were, they are very difficult to cure. It is, of course, possible to remove them and temporary relief afforded; but, since the conditions that gave rise to them originally are not removed, corns return and set up the same mischief. Prevent them, if possible. As soon as the slightest suspicion of hardened cuticle appears in the places where corns usually grow,

attack it with pumice stone. If the skin is tender afterward, cover it with a piece of chamois or soft kid. The pressure that was exerted by the shoe on this spot is thus slightly relieved, and by keeping up these simple measures the skin can be kept in good condition.

There are any number of remedies advised for the removal of fully formed corns. The favorite one of a French chiropodist contains:

Salicylic acid.....	1 gramme
Tincture of cannabis indica.....	½ gramme
Alcohol, 90 per cent.....	1 gramme
Ether, 65 per cent.....	2½ grammes
Collodion.....	5 grammes

Better results are obtained if a foot bath as hot as can be borne, containing ordinary washing soda, is taken first. Then apply the above remedy with a camel's hair brush to the softened corn *only*, for three to five nights, when it can usually be lifted out. Sometimes it is necessary to repeat the treatment.

The practice of affording oneself temporary relief by keeping corns "trimmed" is very bad, as this only stimulates their growth. Either have them removed by a specialist, or pursue proper home treatment.

Painful corns should not be removed until the soreness has been subdued. Usually several applications of tincture of iodine will effect this; if not, paint the corn with:

Sodium borate.....	1 dram
Fluid extract of cannabis indica.....	1 scruple
Collodion.....	1 ounce

Then cover with a round piece of chamois, and bind it on with adhesive plaster.

Where there is a tendency to soft corns, the use of a medicated talcum powder is often all that is needed to arrest their formation, because they are due to moisture between the toes, and very often to pressure of narrow shoes. A strip of absorbent cotton between the toes is good, and a layer of soft kid is sometimes corrective. These corns fester, and are extremely painful, and may become dangerous through infection. Apply pure peroxide of hydrogen to them on a bit of cotton at the end of an orange stick; mop it on thoroughly

until the corn ceases to *foam*; then dust with antiseptic powder—formula given above—cover with medicated or absorbent cotton, and strap this on with adhesive plaster. It is usually well in twenty-four hours; but it is best to keep the treatment up for another day or two.

Dry tannin placed between the toes is also advised as a cure for soft corns.

What price can be heavier to pay for vanity and the following of absurd fashions than that disfiguring and painful deformity of the foot, commonly called *bunion*? A *bunion* is not a corn, as so many believe, although corns frequently develop upon bunions. Shoes that are too short, and thus force back the great toe, and too narrow, so pushing it outward, cause a dislocation of the great toe joint—this is a *bunion*. When the membrane covering this joint becomes affected, we have that excruciatingly painful condition—an *inflamed bunion*. In the beginning, broad-toed shoes will sometimes correct the trouble.

Relief is often afforded by plunging the parts in very hot water, afterward painting with pure tincture of iodine. A noted dermatologist recommends the following for bunions:

Carbolic acid.....	2 drams
Tincture of iodine.....	2 drams
Glycerin	2 drams

This is applied with a camel's hair brush daily.

For very painful bunions, a warm, flaxseed poultice worn during the night often eases the part; and the following ointment is exceedingly good:

Ichthyol ointment (50 per cent.).....	1 ounce
Hydrous wool fat.....	1 ounce

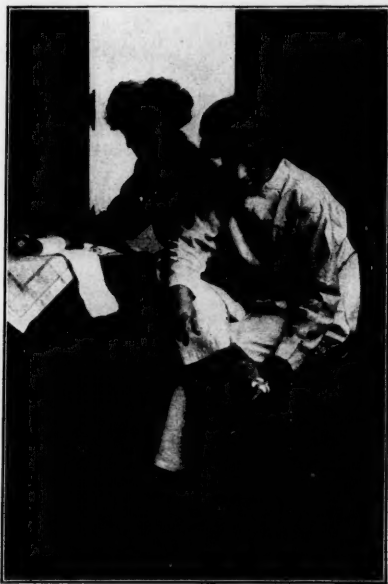
Mix. Spread the ointment on a clean bandage, and bind it around the joint.

One seldom sees a foot that has not one or more crippled nails. Those upon the small toes are usually greatly thickened, and resemble a horny mass, for the reduction of which the services of a chiropodist are required. With time and patience, much can be done at home for them. After soaking the foot in hot water that has been softened with washing soda and bran flour, scrape away as

much of the mass as can be removed with a cuticle knife, then carefully cut down with nail nippers. If this causes pain, do not continue; otherwise, reduce the nail as much as possible, trim the edges with a file, and cover it with an application of liquid collodion.

Ingrown toe nails are of frequent occurrence, and unless properly cared for may give rise to no end of mischief. Where the condition exists without any serious discomfort, it can be cured by lifting that part of the nail which is growing inward from its bed, and gently pushing a small tuft of absorbent cotton under it. This must be renewed morning and night, and worn until the nail has been trained to grow on a straight line.

When it has pressed its way into the surrounding flesh, causing redness and painful swelling, the same method as the above is pursued, with the addition of applications of nitrate of silver. A strong solution is necessary—sixty



Strap medicated cotton over bunion to relieve pressure and pain.

grains of nitrate of silver to one ounce of distilled water. This is swabbed over the swelling, and a tuft of cotton saturated with the liquid is inserted under the toe nail. Relief quickly follows. This treatment will blacken the parts; but it must be kept up until a cure is effected. Never scrape a hollow down the center of the nail, or cut a notch in it, or cut away the corners; these things do more harm than good. Let the nail grow out, and trim it off evenly with the toe, then smooth it off nicely with the file.

Feet that are dull, and heavy, and sometimes become cold and clammy, are probably the victims of sluggish circulation and impoverished blood—that is, blood lacking in red corpuscles. Of course, local measures will whip up the circulation temporarily; but permanent relief comes only when the blood is improved.

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Locally, immersion of the feet in warm, stimulating baths, rubbing them briskly afterward with a Turkish towel; also foot gymnastics, such as raising and lowering the body upon the toes, bending the feet in various directions from the ankle joint, practicing the two-step and waltz step, are all valuable aids in restoring youth, grace, and elasticity to the feet.

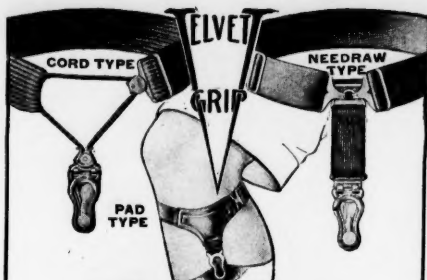
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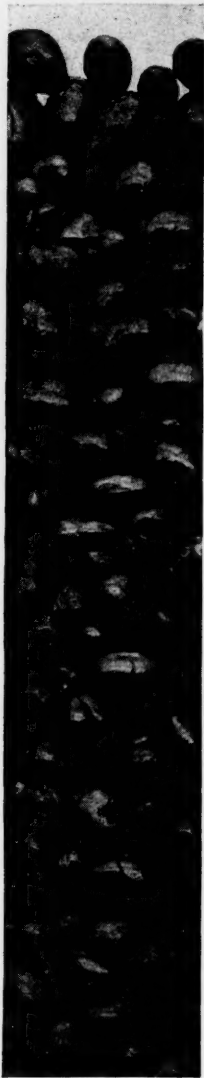
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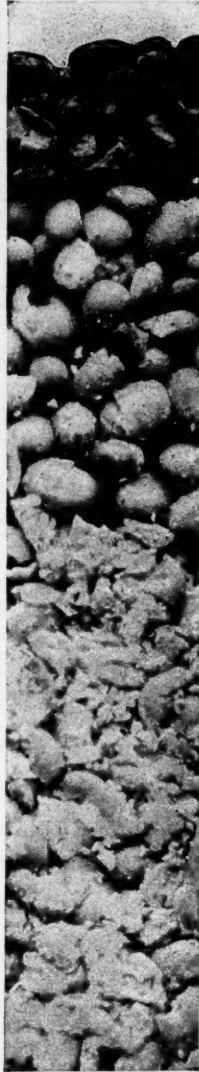
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How Shall The Accouchement Chamber Be Prepared?

Baby's coming is an event and the preparations cannot be too embracing and complete. "The New Baby" is the title of a practical guide for expectant mothers. It is written by such well-known physicians as Thos. M. Achen, M.D., Wm. M. Stowell, M.D., and Stephen O. Storck, D.D.S. They tell the proper diet, exercise and clothing for the mother, and the feeding and hygiene that baby needs, etc., etc. One interesting chapter is entitled "Schedule of Baby's Day for the First Three Months." In another chapter, a prominent maternity nurse tells how to prepare for the accouchement. The suggestions for the layette, baby's accessories and utensils, etc., are from one of the largest manufacturers of such articles.

"The New Baby" is not a big and cumbersome volume filled with dreary technical terms. It is written in a simple and interesting style and tells directly what to do and what not to do. The information is authoritative. The suggestions are practical. It is a book of real value—one to which you will refer again and again, and this book will be given you—FREE—by



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Medal Awarded on a new Device that seems destined to do away with the Truss

A Medal with diploma showing certificate of merit of the first class was recently awarded by the Brixton Institute, (Department of Science), London, to an American residing in St. Louis, for the invention of the **PLAS-TR-PAD** for rupture.

Mr. F. J. Stuart, the inventor, has been granted letters patent by many governments on this form of Hernia Support and Medicine Applicator. The **Plas-tr-pad** is made self-adhesive obviously to prevent slipping and to afford an arrangement to hold the rupture securely in place and at the same time apply a healing, soothing remedy continuously to the affected parts. This remedy is absorbed thru the pores of the skin, to contract and strengthen the weakened muscles and relieve the parts of pain.

The British Government granting letters patent made possible the occasion for awarding this Medal and Diploma.

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Stuart's **Plas-tr-pads** are different from the painful truss, being made self-adhesive purposely to hold the rupture in place without straps, buckles or springs—cannot slip, so cannot chafe or compress against the pelvic bone. Thousands, suffering from most obstinate cases, have successfully treated themselves in the privacy of the home without hindrance from work.

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OUTDOOR SPORTS



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And Cuticura Ointment should be inseparable. No other emollients do so much in maintaining the purity and beauty of the complexion, hands and hair, under all circumstances.

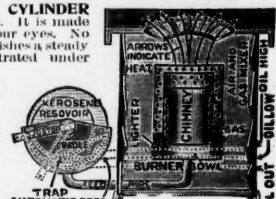
Sold throughout the world. Depots: London, 27, Charterhouse Sq.; Paris, 10, Chaussee d'Antin; Australia, R. Towns & Co., Sydney; India, B. K. Paul, Calcutta; So. Africa, Lennon, Ltd., Cape Town; Johannesburg, Natal, etc.; U. S. A., Potter Drug & Chem. Corp., Sole Props., 133 Columbus Ave., Boston. ³²Free, from Boston or London depots, a sample of Cuticura Soap and Ointment, with 32-p. booklet.

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Portable Oil-Gas Stove

Will boil, bake, fry, roast—cook anything. You can bake biscuits on one burner, cook your dinner on the others. One burner may cook all you need; the others are turned off. You only pay for a fire when you want it. Plenty of heat where you want it—when you want it—as much heat as you want, slow fire or fast fire. Portable, used in any part of the house.

IN THE OPEN AIR CYLINDER the gas is superheated. It is made and burned before your eyes. No closed chamber. Furnishes a steady intense heat, concentrated under cooking vessels and absorbed by articles being cooked, not thrown out to overheat the kitchen. Heat under control. To put fire out turn regulator—oil runs back—fire goes out. Not dangerous like gasoline. All parts open—nothing to clog or close up.



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MANY THOUSANDS sent to families in various parts of the world. Men and women enthusiastic over its comfort and convenience.

F. G. Boylston, S. C., "Easy to run, nice and clean. Cooked for a family of six, 3 days, only 3 quarts of oil." Wm. O. Fox, Mo., "Can get a meal in 20 minutes; baked biscuits in 4 minutes." Rev. E. H. Marshall, Va., "It gives the best of heat; 24c of oil lasts a whole week to do the cooking and baking for 3 in family." Mrs. M. E. King, Ky., "I am delighted; I have baked and cooked, washed and ironed. Can do anything my range does, besides no danger to burn the house." Mr. Ed. N. Helwig, Ont., "Only used a half gallon of oil last week for cooking, baking and ironing."

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or cooking exclusively. **IDEAL FOR Roasting, Cooking, Baking, Ironing, warming** fruit, picnics, cottages, camping.

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Buy wholesale—sell Retail. Men and Women, at home—all or part time—showing—taking orders. Hied & Frazer, Texas, write: "Enclose order for \$81. RUSH Sell like hot cakes. Sold 50 stoves in our town." B. L. Husted, Mich., "Was out one day and sold 12 stoves." Ira P. Adams, Ind., "Ordered 3 stoves, then 12." Chas. P. Schroeder, Conn., "Bought 40 stoves one order." J. D. Whitman, Ore., "First ordered 12 stoves, then 36." W. G. Windsor, Ariz., ordered 1 stove, then 14 stoves. E. F. Wright, Okla., ordered 1 stove, then 3 more, and says "Stoves are giving satisfaction." J. R. Scott, Tenn., ordered 1 stove, then 6 stoves, says "I am well pleased—does all you claim." Constant demand.

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We want to send a free 50-cent package of our new discovery to the people who are called “slats” and “bean poles,” to bony women, whose clothes never look “anyhow,” no matter how expensively dressed, to the skinny men, who fail to gain social or business recognition on account of their starved appearance. We care not whether you have been thin from birth, whether you have lost flesh through sickness, how many flesh builders you have experimented with. We take the risk and assume it cheerfully. If we cannot put pounds and pounds of healthy flesh on your frame we don’t want your money.

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similated. It is a thoroughly scientific principle, this Sargol, and builds up the thin, weak and debilitated without any nauseous dosing.

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We could not publish this offer if we were not prepared to live up to it. It is only the astounding results of our new method of treatment that make such an offer and such a guarantee possible on our part. So cut off the coupon to-day and mail it at once to The Sargol Company, 390 J Herald Building, Binghamton, N.Y., and please inclose 10c with your letter to help pay distribution expenses. Take our word, you’ll never regret it.

FREE SARGOL COUPON

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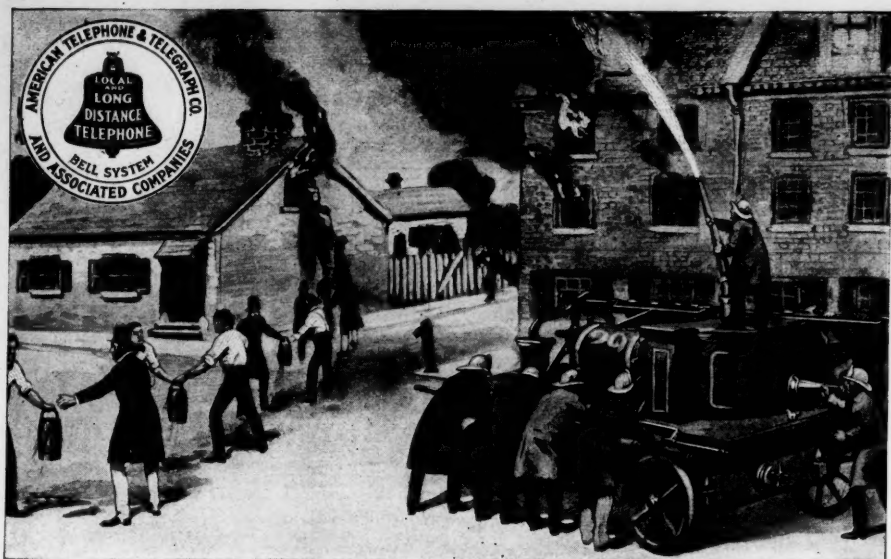
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**Both Need Team Work, Modern Tools
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Twenty men with twenty buckets can put out a small fire if each man works by himself.

If twenty men form a line and pass the buckets from hand to hand, they can put out a larger fire. But the same twenty men on the brakes of a "hand tub" can force a continuous stream of water through a pipe so fast that the bucket brigade seems futile by comparison.

The modern firefighter has gone away beyond the "hand tub." Mechanics build a steam fire engine, miners dig coal to feed it, workmen build reservoirs and lay pipes so that each nozzleman and engineer is worth a score of the old-fashioned firefighters.

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The Bell telephone system is an example of co-operation between 75,000 stockholders, 120,000 employees and six million subscribers.

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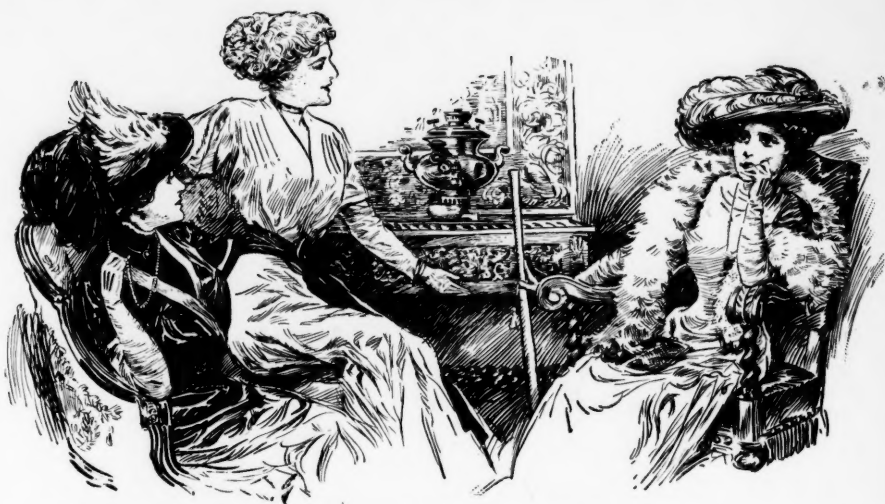
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One Policy

One System

Universal Service

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"I declare I don't know what to do! My husband doesn't eat hardly anything any more. At every meal he grumbles and finds fault, no matter how much I have tried to prepare something that I thought would particularly please him. He's nervous and irritable too, and doesn't sleep well."

A clear case of dyspepsia. Strenuous business life burns up that vital energy which is needed by every function of the body. Hasty eating, with the mind concentrated on other things, soon steals away the powers of perfect digestion and assimilation, making it impossible for nature to build up the nervous energy and bodily tissue as fast as they are destroyed.

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The "Best" Tonic

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Pabst Extract is The "Best" Tonic to build up the overworked, strengthen the weak, overcome insomnia, relieve dyspepsia—to help the anaemic, the convales-

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